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THE NOVELS

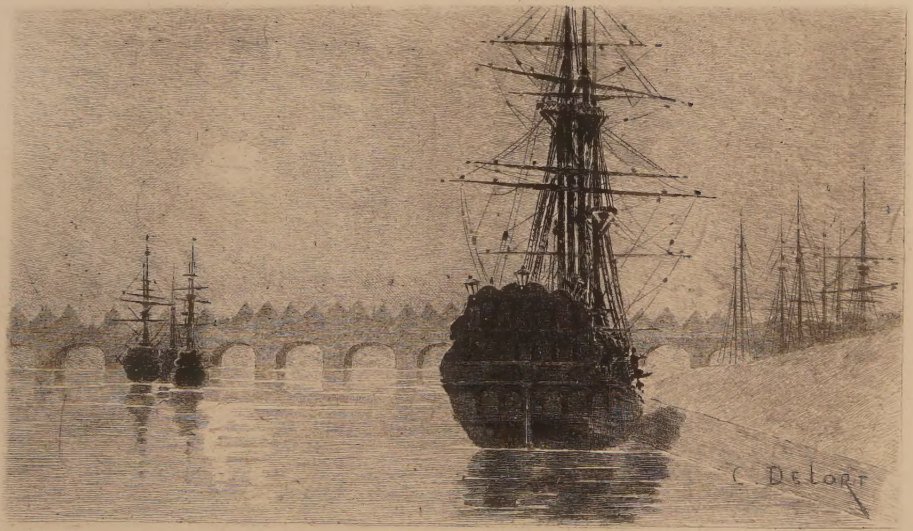
COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

OF

VICTOR HUGO

THE LAUGHING MAN

VOLUME III



C. Delort, inv.

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VICTOR HUGO

THE LAUGHING MAN

TRANSLATED BY

BELLINA PHILLIPS

VOLUME III

PHILADELPHIA
GEORGE BARRIE & SON

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BOOK THREE

THE BEGINNING OF THE RIFT

I.

TADCASTER INN

At this period, London had but one bridge, London Bridge, with houses upon it.

This bridge united London to Southwark, a suburb paved and graveled with pebbles from the Thames, wholly composed of lanes and alleys, having very contracted spots, and, like the City, a quantity of buildings, dwellings and hovels, all of wood; a combustible jumble where a fire would be able to work its pleasure. 1666 had proved it.

Southwark was then pronounced *Soudric;* nowadays it is pronounced *Sousuorc,* or very nearly. Indeed, an excellent way to pronounce English names is, not to pronounce them at all. Thus, for Southampton, say *Stpntn.*

It was the time when *Chatham* was pronounced *Je t'aime.*

The Southwark of that time resembled the Southwark of these days, as Vaugirard resembles Marseilles. It was a borough; it is a city. Nevertheless there was considerable

activity there in the way of navigation. The long old Cyclopean wall along the Thames, had rings fastened in it, where the river barges were moored. This wall was called Effroc's Wall or Effroc-Stone. York, when it was Saxon, was called Effroc. A legend related that a Duke of Effroc had drowned himself at the foot of this wall. The water, in fact, was deep enough for a duke. At low tide there were still six good fathoms. The excellence of this little anchorage attracted sea vessels, and the old Dutch paunch, called the *Vograat*, anchored at the Effroc-Stone. The *Vograat* made the direct trip from London to Rotterdam and from Rotterdam to London, once a week. Other barges left twice a day, either for Deptford, or for Greenwich, or for Gravesend, going down by one tide and coming up with the other. The trip to Gravesend, although twenty miles, was made in six hours.

The *Vograat* was of a model that nowadays can be seen only in naval museums. This paunch was something of a junk. At that time, while France was copying Greece, Holland was copying China. The *Vograat*, a heavy two-masted hull, had perpendicular water-tight partitions, with a very deep cabin amidships, and two decks, one fore and the other aft; they were flat, like those of the iron

turret-ships of the present day; this was an advantage, as it lessened the hold of the waves on the vessel, in heavy weather, but it had the disadvantage of exposing the crew to heavy seas, on account of the absence of bulwarks. There was nothing to keep a man about to fall, from going overboard. Hence there were frequent falls and losses of men, which caused the model to be given up. The *Vograat* ran straight to Holland and did not even touch at Gravesend.

An old stone cornice, rock as much as masonry, ran along the base of the Effroc-Stone, and being available at all tides, facilitated communication with the boats moored to the wall. The wall, at certain intervals, was provided with stairs. It marked the southern point of Southwark. An embankment allowed passers-by to lean on the top of the Effroc-Stone, as on the parapet of a quay. The Thames could be seen from there. On the other side of the water, London ended. There were only fields.

Higher up the stream than the Effroc-Stone, at the bend of the Thames, nearly opposite Saint James' Palace, behind Lambeth House, not far from the promenade then called Foxhall (*Vauxhall*, probably), between a pottery where they made porcelain, and a glass factory, where they made colored bottles, there

was one of those vast plots of waste and grass-grown ground, formerly called meadows and malls in France, and in England, bowling-greens. From bowling-green, a green carpet for rolling balls, we have made "boulingrin." Nowadays we have this field in our houses, only we put it on a table, it is made of cloth instead of turf, and we call it billiards.

Indeed, we cannot see why, having *boulevard* (boule-vert), which is the same word as *bowling-green*, we have given ourselves *boulingrin*. It is surprising that so grave a personage as the Dictionary should indulge in such useless luxuries.

The Southwark bowling-green was called Tarrinzeau-Field, because it formerly belonged to the Barons Hastings, who are Barons Tarrinzeau and Mauchline. Tarrinzeau-Field had passed from the Lords Hastings to the Lords Tadcaster, who laid it out as a public resort, as a matter of speculation, just as later, a Duke of Orleans speculated with the Palais Royal. Then Tarrinzeau-Field had become waste pasture and parochial property.

Tarrinzeau-Field was a sort of permanent fair-ground crowded with jugglers, acrobats, mountebanks, platform-musicians, and always full of fools who "come to look at the Devil," as Archbishop Sharp said. To look at the devil, means going to the show.

Several inns, which took in, and sent the public to these shows, were open on this holiday place, all the year round, and prospered there. These inns were simply booths, inhabited during the day, only. In the evening the tavern-keeper put the key of the tavern in his pocket and went away. Only one of these inns was a house. There was no other dwelling-place in the whole bowling-green, the fair-ground booths being apt to disappear from one moment to another, as mountebanks have no ties, and lead a life of vagabondage. Mountebanks have rootless lives.

This inn, called Tadcaster Inn, after the name of the old lords, was an inn rather than a tavern, and a public house rather than an inn, and had a carriage entrance and a rather large court-yard.

The carriage entrance, opening from the court-yard on the square, was the legitimate door of Tadcaster Inn, but it had a bastard door next to it by which people entered. Whoever says bastard, says preferred. This low door was the only one through which people passed. It opened into the drinking-room proper, which was a wide, smoky, shabby room, furnished with tables and having a low ceiling. Above it, on the first floor, was a window, to the iron bars of which the sign-board of the inn was fastened and hung. The

large door, barred and bolted permanently, remained closed.

It was necessary to go through the drinking-room to get into the court.

There was a master and a boy in Tadcaster Inn. The master was called Master Nicless. The boy was called Govicum. Master Nicless, —Nicholas, no doubt, which becomes Nicless in the English pronunciation,—was a miserly and timid widower, who held the laws in great respect. Moreover, he had hairy hands and bushy eyebrows. As for the fourteen-year-old boy, who poured out drink and answered to the name of Govicum, he had a big merry face and an apron. His hair was closely clipped, a mark of servitude.

He slept on the ground floor, in a closet where they had formerly kept a dog. This closet had a little hinged window, looking out on the bowling-green.

II.

OPEN-AIR ELOQUENCE

One evening when there was a very high wind, and it was quite cold, and there was every reason in the world for hurrying along the street, a man who was walking in Tarrinzeau-Field, under the wall of Tadcaster Inn, suddenly stopped. It was in the last months of the winter of 1704 to 1705. This man, whose dress indicated a sailor, was of good appearance and fine figure, a style prescribed for court people, and not forbidden to common people. Why had he stopped? To listen. To what was he listening? To a voice which was probably speaking in the court-yard, on the other side of the wall, a somewhat senile voice, but nevertheless so loud, that it reached the passers-by in the street. At the same time, the hubbub of a crowd, could be heard in the enclosure where the voice was perorating. This voice said:

"Men and women of London, here I am. I congratulate you cordially on being

English. You are a great people. I say more, you are a great populace. The blows you give with your fists are even finer than the blows you give with your swords. You have a good appetite. You are the nation which eats other nations. A magnificent function. This suction of the world classes England by itself. As regards politics and philosophy, and the management of colonies, populations and industries, and in the will to do that harm to others which is good for one's self, you are peculiar and surprising. The time is coming when there will be two placards on earth; on one will be read: 'This side for Men;' on the other there will be: 'This side for Englishmen.' I declare this for your glòry, I who am neither an Englishman, nor a man, having the honor to be a bear. Furthermore, I am a doctor. These two can go together. Gentlemen, I teach. What? Two kinds of things; those I know, and those I don't know. I sell drugs and I give away ideas. Come near, and listen. Knowledge invites you. Open your ear. If it is little, it will hold little truth; if it is large, much stupidity will go into it. Therefore, attention. I teach Pseudodoxia Epidemica. I have a comrade who makes people laugh; I make them think. We live in the same box, for laughter is as well born as knowledge. When

people asked Democritus: 'How do you know?' he would answer: 'I laugh.' And I, if people ask me: 'Why do you laugh?' I shall answer: 'I know.' However, I do not laugh. I am the rectifier of popular errors. I undertake the cleansing of your intellect. It is not clean. God permits people to deceive themselves, and to be deceived. It is no use to be stupidly modest; I frankly confess that I believe in God, even when He is wrong. Only, when I see filth—and errors are filth—I sweep it away. How do I know what I know? That is nobody's business but mine. Every one gets knowledge as he can. Lactantius asked questions of a bronze head of Virgil, which answered him. Sylvester II. conversed with birds; did the birds speak? Did the Pope chirp? These are questions. The dead child of Rabbi Eleazer spoke to Saint Augustine. Between ourselves, I doubt all these facts, except the last. The dead child spoke, granted; but he had a gold blade under his tongue, on which divers constellations were engraved. So he cheated. The fact explains itself. You see my moderation. I separate the true from the false. See! here are other errors which you, no doubt, share, you poor people, and from which I wish to free you. Dioscorides believed that there was a god even in

henbane; Chrysippus, in cynopaste; Josephus, in the bauras root; Homer, in the moly plant. All were mistaken. That which is in herbs is not a god; it is a demon. I have verified this fact. It is not true, that the serpent which tempted Eve, had like Cadmus, a human face. Garcias de Horto, Cadamosto, and John Hugo, Archbishop of Treves, deny that it suffices to saw down a tree for capturing an elephant. I incline to their opinion. Citizens, the efforts of Lucifer are the cause of false opinions. Under the reign of such a prince, meteors of errors and perdition must appear. People, Claudius Pulcher did not die because the chickens refused to come out of the chicken-house; the truth is that Lucifer, having foreseen the death of Claudius Pulcher, took care to prevent these animals from eating. Supposing that Beëlzebub gave the Emperor Vespasian the power of straightening the lame and giving sight to the blind by touching them, the action was laudable in itself, but the motive was culpable. Gentlemen, mistrust those pretenders to science who make the most of briony root and ivy-grape, and who make eye-washes with honey and cock's blood. Learn how to see clearly into lies. It is not exact that Orion was born of a natural necessity of Jupiter; the truth is, that it was Mercury who produced this star in that

way. It is not true that Adam had a navel. When Saint George killed a dragon, he did not have a saint's daughter near him. Saint Jerome did not have a clock on the mantel-piece of his study; firstly, because, being in a grotto, he had no study; secondly, because he had no mantel-piece; thirdly, because there were no clocks in his time. Let us rectify. Let us rectify. Oh, gentles, who listen to me, if any one tells you that a lizard will be born in the brain of any one who smells the herb valerian; that in putrefaction an ox changes into bees, and a horse into hornets; that man weighs more dead than alive; that he-goats' blood dissolves emeralds; that a caterpillar, a fly and a spider, seen on the same tree announce famine, war and the plague; that epilepsy can be cured by means of a worm found in the head of a roe-buck, don't believe a word of it, for all these things are errors. But here are truths: the skin of the sea-calf is a protection against thunder; the toad feeds on earth, which makes a stone grow in his head; the rose of Jericho blooms on Christmas Eve; snakes cannot bear the shadow of the ash-tree; the elephant has no joints, and is forced to sleep standing up against a tree; make a toad hatch a cock's egg, and you will have a scorpion that will make a salamander for you; a blind man

recovers his sight by putting one hand on the left side of the altar and the other hand over his eyes; virginity does not exclude maternity. Good people, nourish yourselves with these proofs. Hereupon, you can believe in God in two ways; either as thirst believes in the orange, or as the donkey believes in the whip. Now, I am going to introduce you to the members of my company."

Here a pretty violent gust of wind shook the window-frames and the shutters of the inn, which was a detached house. This caused a sort of long celestial murmur. The orator waited a moment, and then resumed his discourse.

"An interruption. Very good. Speak, North wind. Gentlemen, I am not angry. The wind is talkative, like all the solitary. Nobody keeps him company up there. Then he jabbers. I take up the thread of my discourse again. You here see associated artists. We are four. *A lupo principium.* I begin by my friend, who is a wolf. He makes no secret of it. Look at him. He is grave, learned and sagacious. Providence probably had, for a while, the idea of making him a university doctor; but one must be just a little bit stupid for that, and he is not. I add that he has no prejudices and is not

aristocratic. Occasionally, he chats with a female dog, he who would have the right to speak to a female wolf. His dauphins, if he ever has had any, probably mingle their mother's bark gracefully with their father's howl. For he howls. One must howl with men. He barks too, in condescension to civilization. A magnanimous mitigation. Homo is a perfected dog. Let us venerate the dog. The dog,—what a curious animal!—he sweats with his tongue, and smiles with his tail. Gentlemen, Homo equals in wisdom, and surpasses in cordiality, the hairless wolf of Mexico, the admirable Xoloïtzeniski. I can add that he is humble. He has the modesty of a wolf who is useful to human beings. He is helpful and charitable, silently. His left paw does not know the good deed that his right paw has done. Such are his merits. Of this other one, my second friend, I say but one word; he is a monster. You will admire him. Once upon a time he was abandoned by pirates on the shores of the wild ocean. This one is a blind girl. Is she an exception? No. We are all blind. The miser is blind; he sees gold and does not see riches. The prodigal is blind; he sees the beginning and he does not see the end. The coquette is blind; she does not see her wrinkles. The learned man is blind; he does not see his

ignorance. The honest man is blind; he does not see the rascal. The rascal is blind; he does not see God. God is blind; for the day when He created the world, He did not see that the Devil had poked himself into it. I, myself, am blind; I speak and I do not see that you are deaf. This blind girl, who accompanies us, is a mysterious priestess. Vesta would have confided her torch to her. There are shadowy places in her character, as soft as the spaces we open in a sheep's fleece. I think her the daughter of a king, without affirming it. A laudable mistrust is the attribute of a sage. As for me, I reason, and I physic. I think, and I dress wounds. *Chirurgus sum.* I cure fevers, miasmas and plagues. Almost all of our phlegmasies and sufferings are issues, and if well cared for, rid us comfortably of other evils which might be worse. Notwithstanding, I do not advise you to have an anthrax, otherwise called a carbuncle. It is a stupid disease, which is good for nothing at all. You die of it, but that is all. I am neither uncultivated nor rustic. I honor eloquence and poetry, and I live in an innocent intimacy with these goddesses. And I conclude with a piece of advice. Gentlemen and gentlewomen, cultivate virtue, modesty, honesty, justice and love in yourselves, on the side whence cometh the light. In

this way everybody here below can have his little flower-pot on his window-sill. My lords and gentlemen, I have said. The play is about to begin."

The man, a sailor most likely, who listened from without, entered the lower room of the inn, crossed it, paid the money that was asked of him, and went into the court-yard filled with people, saw a booth on wheels at the end of the court, wide open, and on this platform, an old man dressed in a bearskin, a young man who looked like a mask, a blind young girl and a wolf.

"Egad!" cried he, "what admirable people."

III.

WHEREIN THE PASSER-BY RE-APPEARS

The Green-Box, which has surely been recognized, had arrived in London. It had settled at Southwark. Ursus had been attracted by the bowling-green, which had this excellence, that the fair never closed there, not even in winter.

It had been agreeable to Ursus to see the dome of Saint Paul's.

London, take it all in all, is a city which has some good in it. To have dedicated a cathedral to Saint Paul, was a daring thing. The real cathedral saint is Saint Peter. Saint Paul is suspected of imagination, and, in ecclesiastical matters, imagination means heresy. Saint Paul is a saint only by extenuating circumstances. He got into heaven only by the stage door.

A cathedral is a sign. Saint Peter indicates Rome, the city of dogma; Saint Paul designates London, the city of schism.

Ursus, whose philosophy had such long

arms that it embraced everything, was just the man to appreciate these shades of difference, and his attraction for London probably came from a certain taste for Saint Paul.

The large court-yard of Tadcaster Inn had determined Ursus' choice. This court-yard seemed to have anticipated the Green-Box; it was a ready-made theatre. This court-yard was square, built up on three sides, with a wall opposite the stories of the inn, and the Green-Box, which had been brought in, thanks to the vast dimensions of the carriage door, was backed against it. A great wooden balcony, covered by a shed and supported on posts, and on which the rooms of the first story opened, ran along the three sides of the interior façade of this court, with two turns at right angles. The windows of the ground floor made the lower boxes, the pavement of the court was the pit, and the balcony made the first circle. The Green-Box placed against the wall had this auditorium before it. This greatly resembled the Globe, where "Othello," "King Lear," and "The Tempest" were played.

In an out of the way corner, behind the Green-Box, there was a stable.

Ursus had made his arrangements with the tavern-keeper, Master Nicless, who, in view of the respect due to the laws, admitted the wolf

only on paying a higher price. The placard: "GWYNPLAINE—THE LAUGHING MAN," unhooked from the Green-Box, had been hung up close to the sign of the inn. The drinking room had, as we know, an inner door which opened into the court. By means of an empty barrel, a little office for "the ticket seller," was improvised next to this door; this was sometimes Fibi, and sometimes Vinos. It was very nearly as it is nowadays. Whoever enters, pays. Under the placard, THE LAUGHING MAN, there was a piece of board, painted white, and hanging from two nails, which bore in large charcoaled letters, the name of Ursus' great piece, "*Chaos Conquered.*"

In the centre of the balcony, precisely opposite the Green-Box, a compartment, between two partitions, having a long window for its principal entrance, had been reserved "for the nobility."

It was wide enough to contain ten spectators in two rows.

"We are in London," said Ursus, "and we must expect some of the gentry."

He had had this "box" furnished with the best chairs from the inn and placed a large arm-chair in the centre, covered with buttercup Utrecht velvet, with cherry designs, in case some alderman's wife should come.

The performances had begun.

The crowd immediately came.

But the compartment for the nobility remained empty.

With that exception, their success was such that no mountebank's memory could recall its equal. All Southwark came flocking in crowds to admire the Laughing Man.

The jugglers and mountebanks of Tarrinzeau-Field were frightened at Gwynplaine. A hawk lighting in a cage of goldfinches, and pecking at their seed-trough, would produce the same effect. Gwynplaine devoured their public.

Besides the small fry of sword-swallowers and contortionists, there were real shows on the bowling-green. There was a circus of women actors which resounded from morning to night, with a magnificent peal of all sorts of instruments—psalteries, drums, rebecks, micamons, timbrels, reeds, dulcimers, gongs, oaten pipes, bagpipes, German horns, English eschaquils, pipes, flutes, piccolos and flageolets. Under one large round tent, there were tumblers who could not have been equaled by our present climbers from the Pyrenees, Dulma, Bordenave and Meylonga, who come down from the peak of Pierrefitte to the tableland of Limaçon, which is just the same thing as falling. There was a traveling

menagerie, where there was a comical tiger, who when whipped by his keeper, tried to snatch his whip and swallow the lash. Even this comedian with jaw and claws, was eclipsed.

Curiosity, applause, receipts, crowd,—the Laughing Man took all. It was done in a twinkling. There was nothing but the Green-Box.

"'Chaos Conquered,' is 'Chaos the Conqueror,'" said Ursus, taking half of Gwynplaine's success, and pulling the table-cloth to his side, as they say in strolling players' jargon.

Gwynplaine's success was prodigious. It remained local, however. Fame does not easily cross the water. The name of Shakespeare took a hundred and thirty years to go from England to France; water is a wall, and if Voltaire, a thing he much regretted later on, had not assisted Shakespeare in his endeavors, Shakespeare, at this very day, would, perhaps, be still on the other side of the wall in England, a captive of insular glory.

Gwynplaine's fame did not pass London Bridge. It did not take the dimensions of the echo of a great city. At least, not at first. But Southwark may suffice the ambition of a clown. Ursus said: "The money bag,

like a girl who has committed a fault, grows visibly."

They played "*Ursus Rursus,*" then "*Chaos Conquered.*"

Between the acts, Ursus justified his right to be called an Engastrimyth and performed transcendent marvels of ventriloquism; he imitated every voice that offered itself in the audience, a song, a cry, so as to astound the singer or the crier himself, by its resemblance, and at times he imitated the buzzing of the crowd and panted as if he alone had been a lot of people. Remarkable talents these.

Besides he made speeches, as we have just seen, like Cicero, sold drugs, attended to diseases, and even cured the sick.

Southwark was captivated.

Ursus was satisfied with the applause of Southwark, but he was not at all surprised.

"These are the ancient Trinobantes," said he.

And he added,—

"Whom I do not confound in delicacy of taste, with the Atrobates, who peopled Berkshire, the Belgians who inhabited Somersetshire, and the Parisians who founded York."

At each performance, the court-yard of the Inn, transformed into a pit, was filled with a ragged and enthusiastic audience. It was composed of water-men, sedan-chair porters,

shipwrights, bargemen, from river barges, sailors just ashore spending their pay in feasting and on girls. There were tall footmen, ruffians and blackguards, who are soldiers condemned for some crime against discipline, to wear their red coat turned inside out, to show the black lining, and for this reason called blackguards, whence we have made *blagueurs*. All these streamed from the street into the theatre, and from the theatre back into the drinking-room. The pint pots they emptied did no harm to the success.

Among these people, whom it is the custom to call "the dregs," there was one taller than the others, larger, stronger, less poor, more square-shouldered, dressed like the common people but not ragged, a most enthusiastic admirer, making room for himself with his fists, wearing his hair in a wild fashion, swearing, shouting, joking, not by any means dirty, and, at need, ready to blacken an eye or pay for a bottle.

This regular frequenter was the passer-by, whose shout of enthusiasm we heard a little while ago.

This connoisseur, fascinated at once, had immediately adopted the Laughing Man. He did not come to every performance. But when he came, he was the one who led the public on. The applause became acclamations;

success did not rise to the frieze, there was none, but to the clouds, which were there. (But these clouds, seeing there was no ceiling, sometimes rained on Ursus' master-piece.)

All this made Ursus notice this man, and Gwynplaine looked at him.

They had a great friend in that stranger!

Ursus and Gwynplaine wanted to know him, or at least know who he was.

One evening, Ursus, at the wings, which were also the kitchen door of the Green-Box, having Master Nicless, the inn-keeper near him by chance, showed him the man in the crowd, and asked him:

"Do you know that man?"

"Certainly."

"Who is he?"

"A sailor."

"What is his name?" said Gwynplaine, interrupting.

"Tom-Jim-Jack," replied the inn-keeper.

Then, as he went down the step-ladder, behind the Green-Box, to go back in the tavern, Master Nicless let fall this reflection, so deep, as to be unintelligible:

"What a pity that he is not a lord! He would be a famous scamp."

For the rest, although they lived in a tavern, the group in the Green-Box had not, in any

way, modified their habits, and maintained their isolation. With the exception of a few words exchanged now and then with the innkeeper, they did not mingle with the permanent or transient inhabitants of the inn, and continued to live among themselves.

Ever since they had been at Southwark, Gwynplaine had fallen into the habit, after the performance, and after the supper, of both the family and horses, and when Ursus and Dea were respectively retiring, of going to the bowling-green to get some fresh air, between eleven o'clock and midnight. A certain vague feeling that we have in our mind, prompts us to nocturnal walks and star-lit saunterings; youth is a mysterious awaiting; that is why it likes to walk at night, without an aim. At this hour, there was nobody on the fair-ground, except some reeling drunkards making wavering shadows in dark corners; the empty taverns were closing, the low room of Tadcaster Inn was putting out its lights, scarcely having a last candle lighting up the last toper in some corner, an indistinct gleam came through the shutters of the half-closed inn, and Gwynplaine, pensive, contented, dreaming, happy in a dim celestial bliss, walked up and down before this half-opened door. What was he thinking of? Of Dea, of nothing, of everything, of the depths.

He never strayed far from the inn, kept back, as by a thread, near Dea. It was enough for him to take a few steps out of doors.

Then he returned, found all the Green-Box asleep, and went to sleep himself.

IV.

CONTRARIES FRATERNIZE IN HATE

Success is not loved, especially by those who fall by it. The eaten rarely adore the eaters. The Laughing Man was making a decided sensation. The surrounding mountebanks were indignant. A theatrical success is a syphon, it pumps in the crowd, and makes a void around itself. The shop across the way grows desperate. The rise in the receipts of the Green-Box, had at once corresponded, as we have said, with a fall in the neighboring receipts. Suddenly the shows, which until then had been so well attended, had to close. It was like a low-water-mark, working inversely, yet with a perfect concordance; increase here, and decrease there. Every theatre knows these tidal effects; it is only high-tide with one, on condition of being low-tide with another. The swarms on the fair-ground, who exhibited their talents and their trumpet flourishes on the surrounding platforms, seeing themselves ruined by

the Laughing Man, were in despair, but were dazzled. All the old men, all the clowns, all the jugglers, envied Gwynplaine. "That fellow is lucky enough to have a wild beast's snout!" Female jugglers and rope-dancers, who had pretty children, looked at them angrily while pointing at Gwynplaine, and saying: "What a pity that you have not a face like that!" Some of them beat their little ones with rage, at finding them so handsome. More than one, if she had known the secret, would have done up her son's face "in the Gwynplaine style." An angel's head that earns no money, is not worth a lucrative imp's face. One day, the mother of a child who was a perfect cherub of beauty, and who played cupids' parts, was heard to say: "We have missed it with our children. No one is a success but that Gwynplaine." And, shaking her fist at her son, she added: "If I only knew your father, I'd give him a piece of my mind!"

Gwynplaine was the goose that laid the golden eggs. What a marvelous phenomenon! There was but this one cry of lamentation in all the booths. The mountebanks, enthusiastic and exasperated, looked at Gwynplaine and gnashed their teeth. Rage admires; that is called envy. Then it howls. They tried to disturb *Chaos Conquered,*

intrigued, hissed, groaned, hooted. This gave Ursus an opportunity for making Hortensian orations to the populace, and gave friend Tom-Jim-Jack the occasion to distribute a few of those straight-from-the-shoulder blows, that restore order. Tom-Jim-Jack's pugilistic blows made Gwynplaine notice him more than ever and won him Ursus' esteem. At a distance, however; for the Green-Box group was sufficient unto itself, and kept aloof from everything, and as for Tom-Jim-Jack, this leader of the rabble seemed to be a sort of supreme bully, without ties, without intimates, a window-smasher, a ringleader, appearing, then disappearing, everybody's comrade and nobody's companion.

This outburst of envy against Gwynplaine did not consider itself beaten, on account of a few buffets from Tom-Jim-Jack. The hootings having miscarried, the mountebanks of Tarrinzeau-Field drew up a petition. They applied to the authorities. That is the usual way. Against any success which annoys us, we stir up the public, and then we petition the magistrate.

The clergy joined the jugglers. The Laugning Man had struck a blow at the sermons. There were empty seats, not only in the booths, but in the churches. The chapels of the five parishes of Southwark had no more

congregations. The sermon was forsaken, to go and see Gwynplaine. *Chaos Conquered*, the Green-Box, the Laughing Man, all these abominations of Baal, carried the day against pulpit eloquence. The voice crying in the desert, *vox clamantis in deserto*, is discontented, and gladly calls upon the government. The pastors of the five parishes complained to the Bishop of London, who complained to Her Majesty.

The jugglers' complaint was based on religion. They declared it to be insulted. They signalized Gwynplaine as a sorcerer and Ursus as a reprobate.

The clergy, for their part, invoked social order. They took action on the fact that the Parliamentary Acts were violated, leaving orthodoxy aside. This was much trickier. For this was Mr. Locke's period, who had died scarcely six months before, October 28th, 1704, and the scepticism, which Bolingbroke was about to breathe into Voltaire, was just beginning. A little later on, Wesley was going to restore the Bible as Loyola restored the Papacy.

In this way the Green-Box was battered at, on both sides; by the jugglers in the name of the Pentateuch, by the chaplains in the name of the police regulations. On one side Heaven, on the other, the Department of

Public Ways; the clergy being for the Department of Streets and Roads, and the mountebanks, for Heaven. The Green-Box was denounced by the priests as an obstruction, and by the buffoons as a sacrilege.

Was there any pretext? Did it expose itself to this? Yes. What was its crime? This: it had a wolf. In England, a wolf is an outlaw. The bull-dog, well and good; but no wolf. England admits the dog that barks, but not the dog that howls; a distinction between the barn-yard and the forest. In their petitions the rectors and the vicars of the five parishes of Southwark, recalled the numerous royal and parliamentary statutes which put the wolf beyond the pale of the law. They moved for something like the imprisonment of Gwynplaine and sending the wolf to the pound, or at least, his expulsion. They made it a question of public interest, of risk for pedestrians, etc. And, thereupon, they made an appeal to the Faculty. They cited the verdict of the College of the Eighty Physicians of London, a learned body, which dates from the time of Henry VIII., has a seal like the State, raises sick people to the dignity of being amenable to their tribunal, has the right to imprison those who infringe its laws and go against its ordinances, and, among other authentic evidences useful for the

health of citizens, has placed this fact gained for science, beyond all doubt: If a wolf sees a man first, the man becomes hoarse for life. Furthermore, one may be bitten.

Homo, therefore, was the pretext.

Ursus had wind of these conspiracies through the inn-keeper. He was uneasy. He was afraid of those two claws, the police and justice. To fear the magistracy, you need only be afraid; it is not necessary to be guilty. Ursus had little desire for contact with sheriffs, provosts, bailiffs and coroners. His eagerness to contemplate these official faces close by, amounted to zero. He had the same curiosity to see the magistrates, that the hare has to see pointers.

He began to regret having come to London.

"'Better' is the enemy of 'Good!'" he muttered aside. "I thought that proverb discredited, I was wrong. Stupid truths are true truths."

Against so many powers in coalition—mountebanks taking in hand the cause of religion, chaplains growing indignant in the name of medicine, the poor Green-Box suspected of sorcery in Gwynplaine and of hydrophobia in Homo,—had but one thing for it, but which is a great force in England, municipal inertia. It is from easy-going local customs, that English liberty

has arisen. Liberty in England acts like the sea around England. It is a tide. Little by little customs rise over the laws. A frightful legislation, submerged under customs; a ferocious code, still visible under the transparence of her immense liberty, such is England.

The Laughing Man, *Chaos Conquered*, Homo, could have the jugglers, the preachers, the bishops, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, Her Majesty, and London, and all England against them, and remain secure, as long as Southwark was for them. The Green-Box was the favorite amusement of the suburb, and the local authorities seemed indifferent. In England, indifference is protection. As long as the Sheriff of the County of Surrey, to whose jurisdiction Southwark belonged, did not stir, Ursus breathed and Homo could sleep on both his wolf's ears, in peace.

As long as they did not lead to personal violence, these hatreds promoted success. The Green-Box, for the time, got along none the worse for them. On the contrary. The public began to hear that there were intrigues at work. The Laughing Man became the more popular for them. Crowds have a scent for denounced things, and take kindly to them. To be suspected, recommends. People instinctively

adopt whatever the index threatens. The denounced thing is a new forbidden fruit; we hasten to bite into it. And then, applause which teases some one, especially when that some one is the authority, is sweet. To show your sympathy with the oppressed, and opposition to the oppressor, while spending a pleasant evening, is agreeable. You are protecting some one while you are amusing yourself. We must add that the theatrical booths of the bowling-green continued to hoot and intrigue against the Laughing Man. Nothing could be better for success. Enemies make an efficacious noise, which sharpens and brightens triumph. A friend grows weary of praising far sooner than an enemy of abusing. To abuse is not to harm. That is what enemies do not know. They cannot help insulting, and that is just their usefulness. It is impossible for them to be silent and this keeps the public wide-awake. The crowd at *Chaos Conquered* grew larger.

Ursus kept all that Master Nicless told him about intrigues and complaints in high places to himself, and did not speak of them to Gwynplaine so as not to disturb the serenity of the performances by pre-occupations. If evil was to come, he would surely know it soon enough.

V.

THE WAPENTAKE

Once, however, he thought he ought to deviate from this prudence, for prudence's sake, and considered it useful to try and make Gwynplaine uneasy. It is true that the matter was, according to Ursus' opinion, far more serious than church and fair cabals. Gwynplaine, on picking up a farthing which had fallen on the ground, while the receipts were being counted, had begun to examine it, and, in presence of the inn-keeper, had made an ill-sounding remark about the contrast between the farthing, representing the wretchedness of the people, and the die, representing the parasitical magnificence of the throne, under the figure of Anne. This remark, repeated by Master Nicless, had traveled so far that it had come back to Ursus through Fibi and Vinos. It gave Ursus a fever. Seditious words. High treason. He admonished Gwynplaine severely.

"Watch over your abominable jaw. There's

one rule for the great: to do nothing; and one rule for the lowly: to say nothing. The poor have but one friend,—silence. They may pronounce but one monosyllable: Yes. To confess and consent is all the right they have. Yes, to the judge. Yes, to the king. The great, if it seems good to them, beat us, I have had my thrashings, it is their prerogative, and they lose none of their grandeur by breaking our bones. The osprey (Latin —ossifrage, *i. e.*, bone-breaker) is a sort of eagle. Let us venerate the sceptre, which is the chief among sticks. Respect, is prudence, and platitude, is egoism. Whoever insults his king, puts himself in the same danger as a girl rashly cutting off a lion's mane. They tell me that you have been gabbling about a farthing, which is the same thing as a French *liard*, and that you have been slandering that august medal, for which they let us have half a quart of salt-herring at the market. Take care. Become serious. Learn that there are punishments. Impregnate yourself with legislative truths. You are in a country where he who saws down a little three-year-old tree, is quietly led to the gallows. Profane swearers are put in the stocks. The drunkard is shut up in a bottomless barrel, so he can walk; with a hole in the top, so his head can come through; and two holes

on the sides, through which his hands come out; but so that he cannot lie down. Whoever strikes any one in Westminster Hall, is imprisoned for life and has his goods confiscated. Whoever strikes any one in the king's palace, has his right hand cut off. For a fillip that happens to make a nose bleed—there you are, one-armed. The man convicted of heresy in a bishop's court is burned alive. It was not for any great thing that Cuthbert Simpson was torn to pieces on a turnstile. Three years ago, in 1702, not far back, as you see, they put a villain named Daniel de Foe, in the pillory; he had had the audacity to print the names of the members of the Commons who had spoken in Parliament the previous day. He who is a felon to Her Majesty, is disemboweled alive, has his heart torn out, and his cheeks slapped with it. Inculcate these notions of right and justice in your mind. Never to permit one's self to say a word, and, to take flight upon the slightest uneasiness; such is the bravery I practise and advise. As regards temerity, imitate the birds, and as regards gossiping, imitate the fishes. However, England has this admirable advantage, that her legislation is very gentle."

His admonition made, Ursus was anxious for a time; Gwynplaine was not. The intrepidity of youth is composed of lack of

experience. At all events, it appeared as if Gwynplaine were right in being easy, for weeks passed peacefully by, and it did not seem as if the remark upon the Queen had had any consequences.

Ursus, as we know, had not enough apathy, and, like the roebuck on watch, kept a look-out in all directions.

One day, a short time after his lecture to Gwynplaine, while looking out of the small window in the wall, which opened on the field, Ursus turned pale.

"Gwynplaine?"

"What?"

"Look."

"Where?"

"In the square."

"Well, what then?"

"Do you see that man passing by?"

"That man in black?"

"Yes."

"Who has a sort of mace in his hand?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well, Gwynplaine, that man is the Wapentake."

"What is the Wapentake?"

"He is the bailiff of the hundred."

"What is the bailiff of the hundred?"

"He is the *præpositus hundredi*."

"What is the *præpositus hundredi?*"

"He is a terrible officer."

"What has he in his hand?"

"That is the iron-weapon."

"What is the iron-weapon?"

"It is an iron thing."

"What does he do with it?"

"First of all he takes oath upon it. And that is why he is called the Wapentake."

"What else?"

"Then he touches you with it."

"With what?"

"With the iron-weapon."

"The Wapentake touches you with the iron-weapon?"

"Yes."

"What does that mean?"

"It means: 'Follow me.'"

"And must you follow him?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"How do I know?"

"But he tells you where he is leading you?"

"No."

"But you certainly can ask him?"

"No."

"What?"

"He says nothing to you, and you say nothing to him."

"But—"

"He touches you with the iron-weapon, and all is said. You must go."

"But where?"

"Behind him."

"But where to?"

"Wherever it pleases him, Gwynplaine."

"And if you resist?"

"You are hanged."

Ursus looked out of the window again, breathed freely, and said: "Thank God, he has passed! He is not coming to our house."

Ursus was probably unreasonably alarmed at Gwynplaine's indiscretion, and at the possible consequences of incautious words.

Master Nicless, who had heard them, had no interest in compromising the poor Green-Box people. Indirectly he made quite a little fortune out of the Laughing Man. "*Chaos Conquered*" had two successes; while it made art triumph in the Green-Box it made drunkenness prosper in the tavern.

VI.

THE MOUSE QUESTIONED BY THE CATS

Ursus had another rather terrible start. This time, it was he who was concerned. He was summoned to Bishopsgate before a commission composed of three disagreeable faces. These three faces were three doctors, called overseers; one was a doctor of theology, a delegate of the Dean of Westminster; the other was a doctor of medicine, a delegate of the College of Eighty, the third was a doctor of history and civil laws, a delegate of the College of Gresham. The three experts, *in omni re scibili*, were the supervisors of all that was said in public, in the whole territory of the one hundred and thirty parishes of London, of the seventy-three of Middlesex, and, by extension, of the five of Southwark. These theological jurisdictions still exist in England and act with useful rigor. The 23d of December, 1868, by a sentence of the Court of Arches, confirmed by a decree of the Lords of the Privy Council, Reverend

Mackonochie, was condemned to censure and costs, for lighting candles on a table. The liturgy does not joke.

So Ursus, one fine day received an order from these delegated doctors, to put in an appearance, which, fortunately, was delivered to him personally and which he could keep secret. He went, upon the summons, without saying a word, shuddering at the mere thought, that he could be considered as exposing himself so far, as to seem to be able to be suspected of being, perhaps, even in a certain degree, rash. He who so often recommended silence to others, now had a sharp lesson, himself. *Garrule, sana te ipsum.* (Oh, babbler, cure thyself.)

The three doctors, delegated and appointed overseers, sat at Bishopsgate, at the end of a room on the ground floor, on three black leather arm-chairs, with the three busts of Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus, on the wall over their heads, a table before them, and a culprit's seat at their feet.

Ursus, introduced by a peaceable and severe usher, entered, saw them, and, at once, gave each one of them, mentally, the name of the infernal judge, that the personage had above his head.

Minos, the first of the three, the overseer of Theology, made him a sign to sit down on the bench.

Ursus bowed correctly, that is, down to the ground, and knowing that bears are charmed with honey, and doctors with Latin, said, while remaining half bent with respect:

"*Tres faciunt capitulum.*"

And with bowed head, for modesty disarms, he went and sat upon the bench.

Each one of the three doctors had before him, on the table, a bundle of papers which he was turning over.

Minos began:

"You speak in public?"

"Yes," replied Ursus.

"By what right?"

"I am a philosopher."

"That does not constitute a right."

"I am also a mountebank," said Ursus.

"That is different."

Ursus breathed, but humbly. Minos resumed:

"As a mountebank, you may speak, but as a philosopher you must be silent."

"I will try," said Ursus.

And he thought to himself: "I may speak, but I must hold my tongue. Rather mixed."

He was very much frightened.

God's overseer continued:

"You say ill-sounding things. You insult religion. You deny the most evident truths.

You propagate the most revolting errors. For instance, you said that virginity excluded maternity."

Ursus meekly raised his eyes.

"I did not say that. I said that maternity excluded virginity."

Minos was thoughtful and growled:

"In fact, that is the contrary."

It was the same thing. But Ursus had parried the first blow.

Minos, meditating upon this reply of Ursus, sank into the depths of his imbecility, which produced silence.

The overseer of History, he, who was Rhadamanthus for Ursus, masked Minos' defeat by this interpellation:

"Accused, your audacities and your errors are of all kinds. You denied that the battle of Pharsalia was lost because Brutus and Cassius had met a negro."

"I said," murmured Ursus, "that it was also because Cæsar was a better captain."

The man of history passed to mythology without any transition.

"You excused the infamies of Acteon."

"I think," insinuated Ursus, "that a man is not dishonored for having seen a naked woman."

"And you are wrong," said the judge, severely.

Rhadamanthus returned to history.

"In reference to the accidents which happened to Mithridates' cavalry, you contested the virtue of herbs and plants. You denied that an herb like the securiduca, could make horseshoes fall off."

"I beg pardon," replied Ursus. "I said that that was possible only for the herb sferra-cavallo. I do not deny the virtue of any plant."

And he added in an undertone:

"Nor of any woman."

By this little digression added to his reply, Ursus was proving to himself, that, anxious as he might be, he was not disconcerted. Ursus was a compound of terror and presence of mind.

"I make a point of this," resumed Rhadamanthus. "You declared that it was silly of Scipio, when he wanted to open the gates of Carthage, to take the herb Æthiopis as a key, because the herb Æthiopis has not the property of breaking locks."

"I simply said, that he would have done better to make use of the herb Lunaria."

"That is a matter of opinion," murmured Rhadamanthus, hit in his turn.

And the man of history was silent.

The man of theology, Minos, having come to himself again, questioned Ursus anew. He had had time to consult his note-books.

"You have classed orpiment among arsenical products, and you have said that one could poison with orpiment. The Bible denies it."

"The Bible denies it," sighed Ursus, "but arsenic affirms it."

The person in whom Ursus saw Æacus, who was the overseer of medicine, and who had not yet spoken, now interfered, and with his eyes arrogantly half closed, loftily came to the aid of Ursus. He said:

"The reply is not inapt."

Ursus thanked with his most servile smile.

Minos made an awful face.

"I continue," resumed Minos. "Answer. You have said that it was false that the basilisk is king of serpents under the name of Cockatrice."

"Very Reverend Sir," said Ursus, "so little did I wish to harm the basilisk, that I said it was very certain that he had a man's head."

"Granted," replied Minos severely, "but you added that Pœrius had seen one which had a falcon's head. Could you prove it?"

"With difficulty," said Ursus.

Here he lost a little ground.

Minos, seizing the advantage, pressed him closely:

"You said that a Jew who becomes a Christian does not smell good."

"But I added that a Christian who becomes a Jew smells bad."

Minos cast a glance at the denunciatory brief.

"You affirm and propagate improbable things. You said that Elien had seen an elephant write maxims."

"Not so, Very Reverend Sir. I merely said that Oppian had heard a hippopotamus discuss a philosophical problem."

"You declared that it was not true that a beechwood dish could cover itself with all the viands one might desire."

"I said that, to have this virtue, it must have been given to you by the Devil."

"Given to me!"

"No, to me, Reverend Sir! No! to no one! To everybody!"

And Ursus thought, aside:

"I don't know what I am saying, any more." But his outward confusion, though extreme, was not too perceptible. Ursus was struggling.

"All this," Minos began again, "implies a certain faith in the Devil."

Ursus stood firm.

"Very Reverend Sir, I am not impious as regards the Devil. Faith in the Devil is the obverse of faith in God. One proves the other. Whoever does not believe in the

Devil a little, does not believe much in God. Whoever believes in the sun, must believe in the shade. The Devil is God's darkness. What is night? The proof of day."

Ursus here improvised an unfathomable combination of philosophy and religion. Minos became thoughtful again, and took another plunge into silence.

Ursus breathed afresh.

A sudden attack took place. Æacus, the delegate of medicine, who had just contemptuously protected Ursus against the theological overseer, suddenly became an assailant, instead of an auxiliary. He placed his clenched fist on his bundle of documents which was thick and packed. Ursus received the following apostrophe from him, full in the breast:

"It is proved that crystal is sublimated ice, and that diamond is sublimated crystal; it is averred that ice becomes crystal in a thousand years, and that crystal becomes diamond in a thousand centuries. You have denied it."

"Not so," replied Ursus, with melancholy. "I only said that in a thousand years ice had time to melt, and that a thousand centuries were not easy to count."

The interrogatory continued, the questions and answers being like the clash of swords.

"You have denied that plants could speak."

"Not at all. But for that, they must be under a gibbet."

"Do you acknowledge that the mandragora cries?"

"No, but it sings."

"You have denied that the fourth finger of the left hand had a cordial virtue."

"I only said that it was an unlucky sign to sneeze to the left."

"You have spoken boldly and insultingly of the Phœnix."

"Learned judge, I merely said that, when he wrote that the brain of the Phœnix was a delicate morsel, but that it caused headaches, Plutarch had gone pretty far, seeing that the Phœnix has never existed."

"Detestable speech. The cinnamalchus, that makes its nest of cinnamon sticks, the rhintacus, that Parysatis used for his poisonings, the manucodiatus, which is the bird of Paradise, and the semenda, which has a three-tubed bill, have all been mistaken for the Phœnix; but the Phœnix has existed."

"I do not oppose this."

"You are an ass."

"I admit it."

"You have confessed that the elder-tree cures quinsy, but you added, that it was not because it had a fairy excrescence in its root."

"I said it was because Judas had hanged himself on an elder."

"A plausible opinion," growled the theologian Minos, glad to pay back the physician Æacus' spiteful thrust.

Ruffled arrogance becomes anger all at once. Æacus became furious.

"Nomadic man, you wander as much with your mind as with your feet. You have suspicious and surprising tendencies. You go to the verge of sorcery. You have dealings with unknown animals. You speak to the populace of things which exist for you alone, and which are of unknown nature, such as the hœmorrhoüs."

"The hœmorrhoüs is a viper which Tremellius saw."

This retort produced a certain confusion in Doctor Æacus' irritated science.

Ursus added:

"The hœmorrhoüs is just as real as the odoriferous hyena and the civet described by Castellus."

Æacus got out of the difficulty by a home-thrust.

"Here are your very words, and very diabolical ones, too. Listen."

With his eyes fixed on the notes, Æacus read:

"Two plants, the thalagssigle and the

aglaphotis are luminous at night. Flowers by day, stars at night."

And looking fixedly at Ursus:

"What have you to say?"

Ursus replied:

"Every plant is a lamp. Perfume is light."

Æacus turned over some more pages.

"You have denied that the vesicles of the otter were equivalent to those of the beaver."

"I limited myself to saying that perhaps one ought to distrust Ætius on this point."

Æacus became savage:

"You practise medicine?"

"I practise with medicine," sighed Ursus timidly.

"Upon the living?"

"Rather than upon the dead," said Ursus.

Ursus retorted with firmness, but with platitude; an admirable mixture, in which suavity predominated. He spoke with such gentleness, that Doctor Æacus felt the need of insulting him.

"What is that you are cooing to us about?" he said roughly.

Ursus was startled, and restricted himself to saying:

"Cooing is for the young and moaning is for the old. Alas! I moan."

Æacus replied:

"Take this warning: If a patient attended by you dies, you will be punished by death."

Ursus risked a question.

"And if he gets well?"

"In that case," replied the doctor, softening his voice, "you will be punished by death."

"That gives but little variety," said Ursus.

The doctor resumed:

"If there is a death, we punish the stupidity. If there is a cure, we punish the presumption. The gallows in either case."

"I was not aware of this detail," murmured Ursus. "I thank you for informing me. One does not know all the beauties of law."

"Mind what you are about."

"Religiously," said Ursus.

"We know what you are doing."

"I," thought Ursus, "I do not always know."

"We could send you to prison."

"I can see that, my lords."

"You cannot deny your infractions and your encroachments."

"My philosophy begs pardon."

"People charge you with all sorts of audacity."

"They are enormously mistaken."

"They say you cure the sick!"

"I am the victim of calumnies."

The triple pair of awful eyebrows fixed on Ursus knotted; the three learned faces came close together and whispered. Ursus had a vision of a vague fool's-cap outlining itself above these three authorized heads; the private and competent mumbling of this trinity lasted a few minutes, during which Ursus felt all the chills and all the fires of anguish; finally Minos, who was the president, turned towards him, and with a furious look said:

"Go away."

Ursus had something of Jonah's sensation, when he came out of the whale's belly.

Minos went on:

"You are discharged!"

Ursus said to himself:

"If ever they catch me at it again! Good-bye, medicine!" And he added, in his innermost soul:

"Henceforward I shall carefully let people die."

Bent double, he bowed to everything, the doctors, the busts, the tables and the walls, and moved towards the door, backwards, disappearing almost like a vanishing shadow.

He left the room slowly, like an innocent man, and the street, rapidly, like a guilty one. The officers of justice have such

singular and obscure ways of acting, that, even when acquitted, one flies from them.

While running away he grumbled: "I had a narrow escape. I am the wild scholar, they are the tame ones. The doctors worry the learned. False science is the excrement of the true, and it is used for the destruction of philosophers. Philosophers, in producing sophists, produce their own misfortune. From thrush droppings the mistletoe is born, of which again bird-lime is made, and with this, the thrush is caught. *Turdus sibi malum cacat!*"

We do not present Ursus as a man of refinement. He had the effrontery to use the words which expressed his thought. He had no more taste than Voltaire.

Ursus returned to the Green-Box, told Master Nicless that he was late because he had followed a pretty woman, and did not breathe a word about his adventure.

Only in the evening, he said quite softly to Homo:

"Know this. I have conquered the three heads of Cerberus."

VII.

WHAT REASONS CAN A DOUBLOON HAVE FOR MIXING IN THE LOW COMPANY OF COPPER PENCE?

A diversion occurred.

Tadcaster Inn was ever more and more a furnace of joy and laughter. No tumult could have been gayer. The inn-keeper and his boy did not suffice for pouring ale, stout and porter. In the evening the lower room, with all its windows lighted up, had not an empty table. They sang, they shouted; the great old hearth, vaulted like an oven, barred with iron and heaped with coal, blazed. It was like a house full of fire and noise.

In the court-yard, that is, in the theatre, there was a still greater crowd.

All the suburban public that Southwark could furnish, crowded to the performances of *Chaos Conquered* to such a degree, that, as soon as the curtain rose, that is, as soon as the panel of the Green-Box was let down, it was impossible to find a place. The windows overflowed with spectators, the balcony was

invaded. Not a single paving-stone of the court-yard could be seen, all were replaced by faces.

Only the compartment for the nobility continued to remain empty.

That made, at the spot which was the centre of the balcony, a black hole, which is called by a slang metaphor, "an oven." There was no one there. A crowd everywhere, except there.

One evening, some one was there.

It was a Saturday, a day when Englishmen hasten to amuse themselves, as they are obliged to be so dull on Sunday. The hall was crowded.

We say *hall*. Shakespeare, too, had for a long time no other theatre than the yard of an inn, and called it a *Hall*.

When the curtain parted on the prologue of *Chaos Conquered*, Ursus, Homo and Gwynplaine being on the stage, Ursus, as usual, cast a glance over the audience, and received a shock.

The compartment "for the nobility" was occupied.

A woman was seated, alone, in the middle of the box, on the Utrecht velvet arm-chair.

She was alone, and she filled the box.

Certain beings seem to radiate light. This woman, like Dea, had her special radiance,

but a different one. Dea was pale, this woman was rosy. Dea was dawn, this woman was morning. Dea was beautiful, this woman was superb. Dea was innocence, candor, whiteness, alabaster; this woman was "the purple," and one felt that she did not fear blushes. Her irradiation overflowed the box, and she sat motionless in its centre with the inexplicable amplitude of an idol.

In the midst of that sordid crowd, she had the superior radiance of the carbuncle, she inundated those people with so much light, that she drowned them in shadow, and all those dark faces bore her eclipse. Her splendor was the blotting out of all else.

Every eye was upon her.

Tom-Jim-Jack was mixed up in the crowd. He disappeared like the rest, in this person's dazzling halo.

This woman absorbed the attention of the public at first, became the competitor to the play, and somewhat detracted from the first effects of *Chaos Conquered*.

However much of a dream she appeared, she was a reality for those who were near her. She was certainly a woman. She was, perhaps, too much of a woman. She was tall and strong, and magnificently showed as much of her person as she could. She wore very large pearl ear-drops, in which were mingled

those odd jewels called *Keys of England.* Her over-dress was of Siam muslin, embroidered with gold thread, a great luxury, for some of these muslin dresses were then worth six hundred crowns. A large diamond brooch fastened her chemise, which could be seen on her bosom, according to the lascivious fashion of the time, and which was made of that Frisian linen, of which Anne of Austria had sheets, so fine, that they could be drawn through a ring. This woman wore a sort of cuirass of rubies, some of them uncut, and precious stones sewed all over her bodice. Besides, her eyebrows were blackened with India ink, and her arms, elbows, shoulders, chin, the lower part of her nostrils, the top of her eyelids, the lobes of her ears, the palms of her hands, and the tips of her fingers, were touched with rouge, and had a most provoking point of color. And above all that, there was an implacable determination to be beautiful. And she was beautiful to the point of ferocity. She was like a panther, able to be a cat, and caress. One of her eyes was blue, the other was black.

Gwynplaine, as well as Ursus, observed this woman.

The Green-Box being something of a phantasmagorical spectacle, *Chaos Conquered* was more of a dream than a piece, and they were

accustomed to produce the effect of a vision on the public; this time the effect came back on themselves, the hall sent back the surprise to the stage, and it was their turn to be startled. They felt the rebound of the fascination.

This woman looked at them, and they looked at her.

For them, at the distance at which they were, and in the luminous haze which the half-light of a theatre makes, the details were effaced; and it was like an hallucination. It was a woman without doubt, but was it not a chimera as well? This entrance of a radiance into their darkness, stupefied them. It was like the coming of an unknown planet. It came from the world of the fortunate. This figure was amplified by irradiation. This woman had nocturnal scintillations upon her, like a Milky Way. Those jewels seemed stars. The diamond brooch was a Pleiad, perhaps. The splendid modeling of her bosom seemed supernatural. On seeing this astral creature, they felt the momentary and chilling approach of the regions of felicity. This inexorably serene face was bending down to the Green-Box and its wretched public, from the heights of Paradise. A supreme curiosity which was gratifying itself, and, at the same time, fed popular curiosity. "Above" permitted "Below" to look at it.

Ursus, Gwynplaine, Vinos, Fibi, the crowd, everyone, experienced the shock of this dazzling vision, except Dea, ignorant in her darkness.

There was something of the apparition in this presence, but none of the ideas which this word usually awakens were realized by this figure; she had nothing transparent, nothing indefinite, nothing floating; no vapor; it was a fresh, rosy, healthy apparition. And yet, under the optical conditions in which Ursus and Gwynplaine were placed, it seemed visionary. Fleshy phantoms, called vampires, exist. Any beauteous queen, who is only a vision for the crowd, but who consumes thirty millions a year of the poor people's money, has that sort of health.

Behind this woman, in the shadow, could be seen her attendant lad, *el mozo*, a child-like little man, fair and pretty, with a serious look. A very young, and very grave groom, was the fashion of that period. This lad was dressed from crown to sole in flame-colored velvet, and had a tuft of oriole feathers on his close-fitting gold-braided cap, which is the mark of a high class of service, and indicated the footman of a very great lady.

The lackey is a part of the lord, and it was impossible not to remark this train-bearing

page, in that woman's shadow. Memory often takes notes unconsciously; and without Gwynplaine's suspecting it, the lad's round cheeks, serious air, braided cap and bunch of feathers, made some impression on his mind. The groom, however, did nothing to make himself noticed; to attract attention, would be to lack respect; he remained standing and passive at the rear of the box, and as far back as the closed door permitted.

Although her *muchacho* train-bearer was present, this woman was none the less alone in the compartment, seeing that a footman does not count.

However powerful the sensation produced by this person, who created the impression of being a great personage, might be, the closing scene of *Chaos Conquered* was still more powerful. Its impression was irresistible, as usual. Perhaps on account of the radiant spectator, for sometimes the spectator becomes a part of the spectacle, there may have been an increase of electricity in the theatre. The contagion of Gwynplaine's laugh was more triumphant than ever. The whole audience went into spasms of indescribable epileptic hilarity, above which the sonorous and masterful laugh of Tom-Jim-Jack could be distinguished.

The unknown woman, who looked at this spectacle with the immobility of a statue, and

the eyes of a phantom, was the only one who did not laugh.

A spectre, but a solar one.

The performance once over, the panel raised, privacy again restored in the Green-Box, Ursus opened and emptied the bag of receipts on the supper table. There was a heap of coarse pence, among which suddenly gleamed a golden Spanish doubloon.

"Hers!" exclaimed Ursus.

This golden doubloon in the midst of these verdigris-covered pence, was, in fact, like that woman in the midst of the crowd. "She has paid a doubloon for her seat!" said Ursus, carried away with enthusiasm.

At this moment the inn-keeper entered the Green-Box, passed his arm out of its back window, opened the little sliding window of which we have spoken, that gave one a view of the square, and which was on a level with the wagon's window, and silently made a sign to Ursus to look out. A magnificently harnessed coach bedecked with plumed footmen bearing torches, was driving off at a fast trot.

Ursus respectfully picked up the doubloon between his thumb and forefinger, showed it to Master Nicless and said:

"She is a goddess."

Then his eyes fell on the coach just about turning the corner of the square, and on top

of which the footmen's torches lit up a golden crown with eight strawberry leaves.

And he exclaimed:

"She is more. She is a duchess."

The coach disappeared. The sound of its rumbling wheels died away.

Ursus remained in ecstasy for a few moments, and with his two fingers which had become a monstrance, made the elevation of the doubloon, as the priest makes the elevation of the host.

Then he placed it on the table, and while gazing at it, began to speak of "the Lady." The inn-keeper answered his questions. She was a duchess. Yes. They knew the title. But the name? They did not know it. Master Nicless had seen the coach, all emblazoned, and the footmen all gold-laced, quite close. The coachman had a wig that would make you think he was a lord-chancellor. The coach was of that rare form called a *cochetumbon*, in Spain, a splendid variety, with a sarcophagus lid, which makes a magnificent support for a crown. The page was so small a sample of mankind, that he could sit on the carriage stirrup outside the door. They make use of these pretty creatures to carry ladies' trains; they carry their messages, too. And had they noticed the tuft of oriole feathers the page wore? How grand that

was! You have to pay a fine, if you wear those feathers without the right to do so. Master Nicless had also seen the lady close by. A sort of queen. So much wealth gives beauty. The skin is fairer, the eye prouder, the gait nobler, the grace more insolent. Nothing equals the impertinent elegance of those hands that never work. Master Nicless spoke of the magnificence of the white skin with its blue veins, that neck, those shoulders, those arms, the rouge everywhere, those pearl pendants, the gold-powdered hair, the profusion of jewels, rubies, diamonds.

"Less brilliant than her eyes," murmured Ursus.

Gwynplaine was silent.

Dea listened.

"And do you know," said the inn-keeper, "what is the most astonishing part of it?"

"What?" inquired Ursus.

"I saw her get into her coach."

"What of that?"

"She did not get in alone."

"Bah!"

"Somebody got in with her."

"Who?"

"Guess."

"The King," said Ursus.

"In the first place," said Master Nicless, "there is no king at present. We are not

under a king. Guess who got into the coach with the Duchess."

"Jupiter," said Ursus.

The inn-keeper replied:

"Tom-Jim-Jack."

Gwynplaine, who had not uttered a word, broke the silence.

"Tom-Jim-Jack!" he cried.

There was a pause of astonishment, during which, one could have heard Dea say, in a low voice:

"Can we not prevent this woman from coming here?"

VIII.

SYMPTOMS OF POISONING

"The apparition" did not return.

She did not return to the play, but she returned to Gwynplaine's mind.

Gwynplaine was, in a certain measure, disturbed.

It seemed to him, that, for the first time in his life, he had seen a woman.

He at once stumbled into the practice of making strange reveries. We must be on our guard against any reverie which controls us. Reverie has the mystery and the subtlety of an odor. It is to thought, what perfume is to the tuberose. Sometimes it is the dilatation of a venomous idea, and it penetrates like smoke. We can poison ourselves with reveries as well as with flowers. Intoxicating, exquisite and pernicious suicide.

Evil thinking is the suicide of the soul. It is poisoning. Reverie attracts, cajoles, lures, entwines, then makes an accomplice of you. It makes you bear your half of the tricks it

plays on conscience. It charms you. Then corrupts you. One can say of reverie what one says of gambling. You begin by being a dupe, you end by being a cheat.

Gwynplaine dreamed.

He had never seen Woman.

He had seen her shadow in all the women of the people, and he had seen her soul in Dea.

He had just seen the reality.

A warm and living skin, under which one felt passionate blood flowing; outlines having the precision of marble and the undulation of the wave, a haughty and impassive face, mingling refusal with attraction, and summing itself up in splendor, hair tinted with the reflection of a blaze, a gorgeousness of adornment which both had, and gave, the thrill of voluptuousness, a suspicion of nudity, betraying the disdainful wish to be possessed, but at arms' length, by the crowd, an ineradicable coquetry, the charm of impenetrability, temptation seasoned by a glimpse of perdition, a promise to the senses, and a threat to the mind, a double anxiety, one being desire, the other, fear. He had just seen this. He had just seen a woman.

He had just seen more and less than a woman—a female.

And at the same time an Olympian creature.

The female of the gods.

That mystery, sex, had just appeared to him.

And where? Where it was inaccessible.

At an infinite distance.

Ironical destiny! The soul, that celestial thing, he held it, he had it in his hand, it was Dea; and sex, that terrestrial thing, he perceived it in the furthest heavens; it was that woman.

A duchess.

More than a duchess, Ursus had said.

What a dizzy height!

Dream itself would recoil from any attempt to scale it.

Was he about to commit the folly of dreaming of that unknown person? He struggled.

He recalled all that Ursus had told him about those semi-royal lofty existences; the philosopher's rambling talk which had seemed so useless to him, now became landmarks for meditation; we often have but a very slight layer of forgetfulness over memory, which, at need, suddenly permits us to see what is below; he imagined that august world, the peerage, to which this woman belonged, as being inexorably superposed to the lowest world, the people, to which he belonged. And did he belong even to the people? Was he not, he, the mountebank, below that which is low? For the first time, since he

had come to the age of reflection, he felt his heart vaguely contract at his baseness, which we would call his abasement, to-day. The paintings and the enumerations of Ursus, his lyrical inventories, his dithyrambs about castles, parks, fountains and colonnades, his displays of wealth and power revived in Gwynplaine's thoughts with all the relief of a reality mingled with the clouds. He was beset by this zenith. It seemed to him chimerical that a man could be a lord. Yet such things were. Incredible fact! There were lords! but were they of flesh and blood like ourselves? That was doubtful. He felt himself at the very bottom of darkness, with walls all about him, and at an immense distance above his head, as though seen through the opening of a well, at the bottom of which he was, he perceived this dazzling confusion of azure, of figures and of rays, which is Olympus. In the midst of all this glory the Duchess shone out resplendent.

He felt a strange, indescribable longing for this woman, which was mixed with all impossibilities.

And this painful contradiction was constantly revolving in his mind in spite of himself; that he saw near him, within reach, in close and tangible reality, a soul; and in the unattainable, in the dim distances of the ideal—the flesh.

None of these thoughts ever came to him in an exact condition. What was in his mind was hazy. Every moment it altered its outlines and floated about. But it was an intense darkness.

Nevertheless, the idea that there was anything here, that he could ever reach, never for an instant came to his mind. Not even in his dreams, did he attempt an ascent towards the Duchess. Fortunately for him.

The trembling of such ladders, when once you have set foot upon them, may remain in your brain forever; you think you are mounting towards Olympus and you reach Bedlam. Any distinct desire that might have taken form within him, would have terrified him. He experienced nothing of the kind.

Besides, would he ever see that woman again? Probably not. Fall in love with a passing gleam on the horizon! No, certainly madness does not go as far as that. To look lovingly at a star, can at need be understood, you see it again, it re-appears, it is fixed. But can one be in love with a flash of lightning?

He had an ebb and flow of dreams. The majestic and seductive idol at the back of the box, stencilled itself luminously on his floating thoughts, then vanished. He thought of it, then thought no more of it, occupied his

mind with other things, came back to it. He was being gently rocked by it, nothing more.

It kept him from sleeping for several nights. Insomnia is as full of dreams as sleep.

It is almost impossible to express the abstruse evolutions which take place in our brain, in their exact limits. The trouble with words, is that they have more outline than ideas. All ideas mingle at the edges; not so, words. A certain vague side of the soul, always escapes them. Expression has boundaries, thought has none.

Such is our dark interior immensity, that what was going on in Gwynplaine hardly touched Dea, in his thought. Dea was sacred, in the very centre of his mind. Nothing could come near her.

And yet, these contradictions make up the whole of the human soul; there was a conflict in him. Was he conscious of it? Scarcely.

In his inmost soul, at the spot where fissures are possible, for we all have such a place, he felt a collision of capricious desires. To Ursus, the matter would have been clear; to Gwynplaine, it was indistinct.

Two instincts, one, the ideal, the other, that of sex, were fighting within him. There are such struggles between the white angel and the angel of darkness, on the bridge over the abyss.

At last, the angel of darkness was overthrown.

Suddenly, one day, Gwynplaine no longer thought of the strange woman.

The combat between the two principles, the duel between his earthly and his heavenly side, had taken place in the darkest part of his nature, and at such a depth, that he had but very indistinctly perceived it.

What is certain, is, that he had not ceased to adore Dea for one moment.

He had had a disorder, and it had gone far; his blood had had a fever, but it was over. Nothing was left but Dea.

Gwynplaine would even have been very much astonished, if he had been told, that Dea had been endangered for a moment.

In a week or two, the phantom which seemed to threaten these two souls, vanished.

There was nothing left in Gwynplaine but his heart for a hearth, and his love as a flame.

Besides, as we have said, "the Duchess" had not come back.

Ursus had found this perfectly simple. The "doubloon lady" is a phenomenon. It comes, pays and disappears. It would be too delightful if it returned.

As for Dea, she did not even allude to this woman who had come and gone. Probably she listened, and was sufficiently informed by

Ursus' sighs, and here and there by some significant expression, such as: "*One does not get gold doubloons every day.*" She spoke no more of "the woman." That is a profound instinct. The soul takes obscure precautions, and does not always take itself into the secret of them. Not to speak of a person, seems to send them far off. We fear to call them back by making inquiries. We put silence on our side as if we were shutting a door.

The incident was forgotten.

Was it really anything? Had it existed? Could anyone say that a shadow had floated between Gwynplaine and Dea? Dea did not know it, and Gwynplaine no longer knew it. No. There had been nothing. The Duchess herself, was outlined in the distant perspective, like an illusion. It was nothing but a moment's dream crossed by Gwynplaine and which he had come out of. A vanished reverie, like a vanished mist, leaves no trace, and, once the cloud has passed, love is no more lessened in the heart, than the sun in the sky.

IX.

ABYSSUS ABYSSUM VOCAT

Another face had disappeared, Tom-Jim-Jack's. He suddenly ceased coming to Tadcaster Inn.

The persons who were so situated as to be able to see the two slopes of the fashionable life of London's great noblemen, could have noticed that at this same time, the *Weekly Gazette*, between two extracts from parish registers, announced the "departure of Lord David Dirry-Moir, by order of Her Majesty, to take command of his frigate in the White Squadron, then cruising on the coasts of Holland."

Ursus noticed that Tom-Jim-Jack no longer came; and it engrossed his thoughts very much. Tom-Jim-Jack had not re-appeared since the day when he had gone off in the same coach with the lady of the doubloon. This Tom-Jim-Jack, who carried off duchesses in his arms, was certainly an enigma! What an interesting search that would make! What

questions to ask! What an amount of things to say! That is why Ursus did not say a word.

Ursus who had lived, knew the smart that rash curiosity can give. Curiosity should always be in proportion to the curious. By listening, one risks an ear; by watching, one risks an eye. It is prudent to hear nothing and to see nothing. Tom-Jim-Jack had got into that princely carriage, the inn-keeper had been a witness of this ascension. This sailor's seating himself next to this lady, had a look of prodigy about it, that made Ursus circumspect. The caprices of the upper life, ought to be sacred for low people. All those reptiles, called the poor, have nothing better to do than to squat in their holes, whenever they notice anything extraordinary. To keep perfectly still is a force. Shut your eyes, if you have not the good fortune to be blind; stop up your ears, if you have not the luck to be deaf; paralyze your tongue, if you have not the perfection of being mute. The great are whatever they wish, the lowly whatever they can be, therefore, let us allow the unknown to pass. Let us not bother mythology; let us not annoy appearances; let us have a profound respect for semblances. Let us not direct our gossiping towards the shrinkings or enlargements which take place in the upper regions, from motives which we ignore. Most

frequently, these are mere optical illusions for us puny creatures. Metamorphosis is the business of gods; the transformations and the disintegrations of the great uncertain personages who float above us, are clouds which it is impossible for us to understand, and perilous to study. Too much attention irritates the Olympians in their evolutions of amusement and fancy, and a thunder-clap may teach you, perhaps, that the bull you are examining too curiously, is Jupiter. Let us not make the folds of the wall-colored cloak of the dreaded power, gape too far open. Indifference is intelligence. Do not budge; that is wholesome. Pretend to be dead, then they will not kill you. Such is the insect's wisdom. Ursus practised it.

The inn-keeper, who was puzzled too, questioned Ursus one day:

"Do you know that we don't see Tom-Jim-Jack any more?"

"Indeed!" said Ursus, "I had not noticed it."

Master Nicless made a remark in a low tone, no doubt on the close intimacy of the ducal coach and Tom-Jim-Jack; a dangerous and irreverent observation, probably, that Ursus was careful not to listen to.

Ursus, however, was too much of an artist not to regret Tom-Jim-Jack. He felt a sort of

disappointment. He did not express his feelings to any one but Homo, the only confidant of whose discretion he felt sure. He whispered in the wolf's ear:

"Since Tom-Jim-Jack has given up coming, I feel a void as a man, and, a chill as a poet."

This outpouring into the heart of a friend, relieved Ursus.

He walled up his thoughts towards Gwynplaine, who, on his part, made no allusion to Tom-Jim-Jack.

Indeed, a Tom-Jim-Jack more or less, mattered little to Gwynplaine, who was absorbed in Dea.

Forgetfulness had taken more and more hold on Gwynplaine. As for Dea, she did not even dream that a slight shock had taken place. At the same time, no more was heard of cabals and complaints against the Laughing Man. Hate seemed to have loosened its hold. All had grown peaceful in, and around the Green-Box. No more envious detraction, either by strolling players, or by priests. No more outside grumbling. They had success without the threat. Destiny has such sudden serenities. Gwynplaine's and Dea's splendid felicity, was for the time, absolutely without a shadow. It had little by little, risen up to the point above which nothing can increase.

There is a word which expresses such situations: apogee. Happiness, like the sea, has its high-tide. The disquieting part of this, for the perfectly happy, is, that the sea ebbs again.

There are two ways of being inaccessible—being very high or very low. The latter, is perhaps, at least as desirable, as the former. Infusoria escape crushing, more surely than the eagle escapes the arrow. As we have already said, if ever any one had this security of lowliness, it was Gwynplaine and Dea; but it had never been so complete. They lived, more and more, one by the other, and in each other, ecstatically. The heart saturates itself with love, as with a divine salt which preserves it, hence the incorruptible clinging of those who have loved each other from the dawn of life, and the freshness of prolonged, old love. There is such a thing as the embalmment of love. Philemon and Baucis are made of Daphnis and Chloe. That sort of old age, a resemblance of twilight to dawn, was evidently reserved for Gwynplaine and Dea. Meanwhile they were young.

Ursus looked at this love, as a physician makes his clinical inspection. Besides, he had what in those days was called "the Hippocratic look." He fixed his wise eye on the pale, frail Dea, and growled: "It is fortunate

that she is happy!" At other times he said: "She is happy, for her health's sake."

He shook his head, and at times, he attentively read Avicenna, translated by Vopiscus Fortunatus, Louvain, 1650, one of his old books, in that part which treated of "heart troubles."

Dea, easily fatigued, suffered from sweats and drowsiness, and, as will be remembered, took a nap in the day-time. Once when she was thus sleeping, stretched on the bear-skin, and Gwynplaine not being by, Ursus bent down softly and laid his ear against Dea's chest, towards her heart. He appeared to listen for a few moments, and while rising, he murmured: "She ought not to have a shock. The weak spot would spread very quickly."

Crowds continued to flock to the performances of *Chaos Conquered.* The success of the Laughing Man seemed inexhaustible. Everybody rushed there; it was not only Southwark now; it was getting to be London, a little. Even the public began to be mixed; it was no longer made up of plain sailors and bargemen; in Master Nicless' opinion, and he was a connoisseur in rabble, there were now noblemen and baronets, disguised as common people, in that populace. Disguise is one of the delights of pride, and was very fashionable at this time. This aristocracy

mingled with the mob was a good sign, and showed a growth of success reaching to London. Gwynplaine's fame had decidedly reached the general public. And it was a fact, indeed. The only thing talked of in London was the Laughing Man. They spoke of him even in the Mohock Club, frequented by lords.

They had no idea of this in the Green-Box, they were satisfied in being happy. Dea's intoxication consisted in touching Gwynplaine's curling and tawny head every evening. In love, nothing is like a habit. All life concentrates in it. The re-appearance of the sun is a habit of the universe. Creation is nothing but a loving woman, and the sun is a lover.

Light is a dazzling caryatid bearing the world. Every day, during one sublime moment, the earth, draped in night, leans upon the rising sun. Blind Dea felt the same return of warmth and hope at the moment when she placed her hand on Gwynplaine's head.

To be two overshadowed creatures mutually adoring each other; to love in the fulness of silence,—one could manage to pass eternity thus.

One evening, Gwynplaine having that surcharge of felicity within him, which like

the intoxication of perfumes, causes a sort of delicious faintness, was prowling, as he usually did after the play was over, in the field, a few hundred feet from the Green-Box. There are such hours of expansion, when one must allow the fulness of one's heart to overflow. The night was dark and transparent; it was bright starlight. The whole fair-ground was deserted, there was nothing but sleep and oblivion in the scattered booths around Tarrinzeau-Field.

A single light was not extinguished; it was the lantern of Tadcaster Inn, which was still open and awaiting Gwynplaine's return.

Midnight had just struck in the five parishes of Southwark, with the intermissions and the differences of sound, from one belfry to another.

Gwynplaine was thinking of Dea. Of what else could he have thought? But that evening, singularly confused, full of a charm in which there was anguish, he dreamed of Dea, as a man dreams of a woman. He reproached himself for it. It was a falling off. The husband's secret encroachment was beginning within him. Sweet and imperious impatience. He was crossing the invisible frontier; on this side of which there is the maid, beyond, there is the wife. He questioned himself anxiously; he felt, what one might call, an

internal blush. The Gwynplaine of former years, had gradually been transformed in the unconsciousness of a mysterious growth. The former modest youth felt himself growing disturbed and uneasy. We have an ear of light, in which the spirit speaks, and an ear of darkness, in which instinct speaks. In this amplifying ear, unknown voices were making proposals. However pure the young man who dreams of love, may be, a certain grossness of the flesh always ends by interposing itself between his dream and him. Intentions lose their transparency. The unavowed desire, demanded by nature, enters into his conscience. Gwynplaine experienced an inexplicable appetite for that material quality, in which all temptations are united, and which was almost absent in Dea. In his fever, which seemed unwholesome to him, he transfigured Dea, towards the perilous side, perhaps, and he tried to exaggerate that seraphic form into a feminine form. Oh, woman, it is thee we need.

Love reaches the point of not wanting too much paradise. It needs the fevered skin, agitated life, the electric and irreparable kiss, unknotted hair, and the embrace having an object. The sidereal is uncomfortable. The ethereal is oppressive. The excess of heaven in love, is the excess of fuel on a fire; the

flame suffers from it. Gwynplaine, beside himself, had the exquisite nightmare of a seizable and seized Dea, and the dizzy meeting which mingles the mystery of creation in two beings. A woman! He heard this deep-seated cry of nature within himself. Like a Pygmalion in a dream, modeling a Galatea out of the azure, he boldly retouched Dea's chaste outline in the depths of his soul; an outline that was too celestial, and had not enough of Eden; for Eden is Eve; and Eve was a female, a carnal mother, a terrestrial nurse, the sacred womb of generations, the breast of inexhaustible milk, the cradle-rocker of the new-born world; and a bosom excludes wings. Virginity is but the hope of maternity. Yet, in Gwynplaine's mirages, Dea hitherto had been above all that was carnal. At this moment, being wild, he tried to make her come down to it, in his thought; and he pulled that thread, sex, which holds every young girl down to earth. Not one of those birds is freed from it. Dea was no more beyond the law than any other, and Gwynplaine, while only half acknowledging it to himself, felt a vague wish that she should submit to it. He had this wish in spite of himself, and with continual relapses. He imagined Dea as human. He reached the point of conceiving an unheard-of idea: Dea,

as a creature, not only of ecstasy, but of voluptuousness; Dea, with her head on a pillow. He was ashamed of this visionary encroachment; it was like an effort of profanation; he resisted this besetting thought; he turned from it, then returned to it; he felt as if he were committing an assault on modesty. Dea was in a cloud for him. He drew away the cloud in trembling as he would have drawn aside a chemise. It was in April.

The spinal column has its reveries.

He took random steps, with that absent-minded rocking one has in solitude. To have no one about you, helps the mind to wander. Where did his thoughts go? He would not have dared to tell even himself. Did they go to heaven? No. To a bed. You were looking at him, ye stars!

Why do we say a lover? We should say, a possessed creature. To be possessed by the devil, is the exception; to be possessed by woman, is the rule. Every man has to succumb to this alienation from himself. What a sorceress a pretty woman is! The true name of love is, captivity.

A man is made prisoner by a woman's soul. By her flesh also. Sometimes more by the flesh than the soul. The soul is the beloved; the flesh is the mistress.

We calumniate the devil. It was not he who tempted Eve. It was Eve who tempted him. The woman began.

Lucifer was quietly passing by. He perceived the woman. He became Satan.

Flesh is the upper side of the unknown. And, strange to say, it provokes by its modesty. Nothing is more agitating. The brazen thing is ashamed.

At this moment, it was this fearful surface love which was agitating and holding Gwynplaine. It is a dangerous moment when we desire nudity. A false step into wrong-doing is possible. What darkness lurks within the fairness of Venus!

Something within Gwynplaine was calling aloud for Dea—Dea the maiden, Dea, man's other half, Dea, flesh and flame, Dea with unveiled bosom. He almost drove the angel away. Mysterious crisis, through which all love passes, and where the ideal is in danger. This is the premeditation of creation.

Moment of heavenly corruption.

Gwynplaine's love for Dea was becoming nuptial. Virginal love is but a transition. The moment had come. Gwynplaine wanted this woman.

He wanted a wife.

A declivity, of which we see but the foreground.

The indistinct appeal of nature is inexorable.

Woman in her entirety—what an abyss!

Fortunately, for Gwynplaine, there was no other woman but Dea. The only one he desired. The only one who could desire him.

Gwynplaine felt that great vague shudder, which is the vital claim of the infinite.

To which must be added the aggravation of Spring. He was breathing the nameless effluvia of sidereal darkness. He was walking along in a delicious rapture. The wandering perfumes of the rising sap, the heady irradiations which float in darkness, the distant opening of nocturnal flowers, the complicity of hidden little nests, the rustling of leaves and water, the sighs rising from everything, the freshness, the warmth, all the mysterious awakening of April and May, is the vast diffusion of sex, whispering voluptuousness, which makes the soul stammer at the dizzy provocation. The ideal no longer knows what it is saying.

Whoever had seen Gwynplaine walk would have thought to himself: "Look! a drunken man!"

Indeed, he almost staggered under the weight of his heart, the Spring and night.

The solitude in the bowling-green was so peaceful, that, at times, he spoke aloud.

To feel one's self not listened to, makes one speak.

He was walking with slow steps, his head down, his hands behind his back, the left within the right, his fingers open.

Suddenly, he felt something glide into the inert opening of his fingers.

He turned around quickly.

He had a paper in his hand, and a man before him.

The man, who had come up behind him, with cat-like stealth, had put this paper in his fingers.

The paper was a letter.

The man, sufficiently distinct in the starlight, was short, chubby, young, grave, and dressed in a flame-colored livery, which could be seen from top to toe, through the vertical opening of a long gray cloak, which was then called a *capenoche*, a contracted Spanish word which means, night-cloak. He wore a crimson cap like a cardinal's skull-cap, on which domesticity was indicated by a band of gold braid. On this cap a tuft of oriole feathers was to be seen.

He was motionless before Gwynplaine. He might have been taken for a silhouette in a dream.

Gwynplaine recognized the Duchess' page.

Before Gwynplaine could utter an exclamation of surprise, he heard the lad's shrill

voice, which was at once child-like and feminine, saying to him:

"At this hour to-morrow, be at the entrance of London Bridge. I shall be there. I will conduct you."

"Where?" asked Gwynplaine.

"Where you are expected."

Gwynplaine dropped his eyes on the letter which he held mechanically in his hand.

When he raised them, the page was no longer there.

A vague dark form, which was rapidly decreasing in size, could be made out in the distance on the fair-ground.

It was the little footman going away. He turned a street corner, and no one was to be seen.

Gwynplaine looked at the page disappear, then he looked at the letter. There are moments in life, when what happens to you, does not happen; stupor keeps you for a time at a certain distance from the fact. Gwynplaine raised the letter to his eyes, like a person who wishes to read; then he perceived that he could not read it for two reasons. First, because he had not unsealed it; and secondly, because it was dark. It was some minutes before it dawned upon him that there was a lantern at the inn. He took a few steps,

but out of his way, and as if he did not know where to go. A somnambulist to whom a phantom had delivered a letter, might walk in that way.

At last, he made up his mind, and ran, rather than walked, towards the inn, stood in the line of light which came through the half-opened door, and by that gleam, once more examined the closed letter. There was no imprint to be seen on the seal, and on the envelope, there was: "*To Gwynplaine.*" He broke the seal, tore the envelope, unfolded the letter, held it fully under the light, and read what follows:

"Thou art hideous, and I am beautiful. Thou art a player, and I am a duchess. I am the first and thou art the last. I want thee. I love thee. Come."

BOOK FOUR

THE PENAL VAULT

I.

THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT GWYNPLAINE

One jet of flame hardly pierces the darkness; another sets fire to a volcano.

Some sparks are enormous.

Gwynplaine read the letter, then read it again. The words "I love thee!" were certainly there.

Successive terrors filled his mind.

The first was that he thought himself mad.

He was mad. That was certain. What he had just seen, had no existence. Twilight spectres were making sport of him, poor wretch. The little scarlet man was a flash in a vision. Sometimes at night, nothings, condensed into a flame, come and laugh at you. After having mocked at him, the illusory being had vanished, leaving Gwynplaine behind him, mad. Darkness does such things.

The second terror, was to discover that he was in his right mind.

A vision? Certainly not. What! with this letter? Had he not a letter in his hands?

Was there not an envelope, a seal, paper and writing? Did he not know from whom that came? There was nothing obscure in this adventure. Some one had taken a pen and ink and had written. Some one had lighted a candle, and sealed it with wax. Was not his name written on the letter? *To Gwynplaine.* The paper smells good. It is all clear. Gwynplaine knew the little man. That dwarf is a groom. The gleam was a livery. This groom made an appointment with Gwynplaine for the next day, at the same hour, at the entrance to London Bridge. Is London Bridge an illusion? No, no, it all hangs together. There is no delirium in that. All is reality. Gwynplaine was perfectly lucid. It was not a phantasmagoria immediately dissolving over his head, and clearing away as it vanished; it was something that had happened to him. No, Gwynplaine was not mad. Gwynplaine was not dreaming. And then he read the letter over again.

Well, yes! But then?

Then it was terrible.

There was a woman who desired him.

A woman desired him! In that case, let no one ever again pronounce the word: incredible. A woman desire him! A woman who has seen his face! A woman who is not blind! And who is this woman? An ugly

one? No. A beauty. A gypsy? No. A duchess.

What was there in all this, and what did it mean? What a peril such a triumph was! But how could he help plunging into it madly?

What! that woman! the siren, the apparition, the lady, the spectator of the visionary box, the dazzling mysterious one! For it was she! It was she, indeed.

The crackling of the fire just started, burst out all over him. It was this strange unknown person! The same who had disturbed him so much! And his first tumultuous thoughts about this woman re-appeared, as if they had been heated at all this sombre fire. Oblivion is nothing but a palimpsest. Let but an incident occur, and all the erasures revive between the lines of astounded memory. Gwynplaine thought he had withdrawn that face from his mind, and he found it there again, and it was impressed there, and it had hollowed out its place in that unconscious brain, guilty of a dream. Unknown to him, the deep craving of reverie had bitten very far in. Now a certain harm was done. And he took up all that henceforward, perhaps irreparable reverie, with eagerness.

What! Some one desired him! What! the princess came down from her throne, the idol from its altar, the statue from its pedestal,

the phantom from its cloud! What! was the chimera coming, from the furthest depths of the impossible! What! was this deity from the painted ceiling, what! this irradiation, what! this nereïd all dripping with precious stones, what! that supreme and unapproachable beauty, was she leaning down towards Gwynplaine from the height of her steep cliff made of rays of light! What! was she stopping her chariot of the dawn, drawn by both turtle doves and dragons, above Gwynplaine, and was she saying to Gwynplaine: Come! What! he, Gwynplaine, was he having the terrifying glory of being the object of such an abasement of the empyrean! Did this woman, if one may call by that name so star-like and sovereign a form, did this woman propose herself, give herself, yield herself! His brain whirled! Olympus was prostituting itself! To whom? To him, Gwynplaine! A courtezan's arms opened in a halo, to press him against a goddess' bosom! And all that without degradation. Such majesty does not soil. The gods are bathed in light. And this goddess who came to him knew what she was doing. She was not ignorant of the horror incarnated in Gwynplaine. She had seen the mask which was Gwynplaine's face! and this mask did not make her recoil. Gwynplaine was beloved in spite of it!

Here was something that went beyond all dreams,—he was loved on account of it! Far from making the goddess draw back, that mask attracted her! Gwynplaine was more than loved, he was desired. He was more than accepted, he was chosen. He, chosen!

What! there where that woman lived, in the royal environment of irresponsible splendor and of power in fullest sway, there were princes, she could take a prince; there were lords, she could take a lord; there were handsome, charming, superb men, she could take an Adonis. And whom did she take? Gnafron! She could choose the immense six-winged seraph in the midst of meteors and thunderbolts, and she chose the larva crawling in the mire. On one side, were highnesses and peers, all grandeur, all opulence, all glory; on the other, a mountebank. The mountebank carried the day!

What sort of scales were there in this woman's heart? With what weights did she weigh her love? This woman took her ducal cap from her head, and flung it on a clown's platform! This woman took the Olympian halo from her brow, and placed it on the bristling poll of a gnome! An indescribable overturning of the world, with insects swarming above, and all the constellations below, was swallowing Gwynplaine, who was bewildered under an avalanche of

light, which made a halo for him in his cloaca. An all-powerful person, revolting against beauty and splendor, gave herself to the damned of darkness, preferred Gwynplaine to Antinoüs—had an attack of curiosity to see the realm of darkness and went down into it, and, from this abdication of the goddess, there arose, crowned and prodigious, the royalty of the wretch! "Thou art hideous. I love thee!" These words struck Gwynplaine in the ugly spot of pride. Pride is the heel, where all heroes are vulnerable. Gwynplaine was flattered in his vanity as a monster. It was for his deformity that he was loved. He too, as much, perhaps even more, than the Jupiters and Apollos, was an exception. He felt himself superhuman, and so much of a monster as to be a god. It was a frightful dazzling.

And now, what was that woman? What did he know of her? All and nothing. She was a duchess, he knew; he knew she was beautiful, that she was rich, that she had liveries, footmen, pages, and running link-bearers around her coroneted coach. He knew that she was in love with him, or, at least, that she said so. As for the rest, he knew nothing about it. He knew her title, but did not know her name. He knew her thought, but did not know her life. Was she

married, single, or a widow? Was she free? Was she controlled by any duties? To what family did she belong? Were there snares, ambushes and reefs around her? Gwynplaine had no suspicion of what gallantry in high, idle places, means—nor that upon those heights there might be caves where these fierce charmers dream, having the bones of previously devoured lovers, scattered pell-mell about them; nor did he know to what tragically cynic experiments, the *ennui* of a woman, who thinks herself above men, may lead her; Gwynplaine had not in his mind the wherewithal to build the scaffolding for a conjecture, for one is badly informed in the social substratum in which he lived; nevertheless, he saw shadowy places. He was aware that all that light was dark. Did he understand? No. Did he guess? Still less. What was there back of that letter? A double-leafed opening; and at the same time a disquieting closure. On one side an avowal. On the other an enigma.

Avowal and enigma, two mouths, one provoking, the other threatening, said the same word: "Dare!"

The perfidy of chance had never taken better measures, and had never allowed a temptation to occur at a fitter time. Gwynplaine, stirred by the Spring, and by the

universal rising of sap, was busy dreaming the dream of all flesh. The old insubmergible man, over whom none of us can triumph, was awakening in that backward youth, who had remained a boy at twenty-four. It was at this very moment, at the most stormy instant of this crisis, that the offer was made him, and that the dazzling naked bosom of the Sphinx arose before him. Youth is an inclined plane. Gwynplaine was leaning forward, someone was pushing him. Who? The season. Who? Night. Who? That woman. If there were no month of April, we should be more virtuous. The flowering hedges are a set of accomplices! Love is the thief, and Spring is the receiver.

Gwynplaine was completely bewildered.

There is a certain fume of evil which precedes wrong-doing, and which conscience cannot breathe. Tempted virtue feels the dark nausea of hell. The opening which yawns, emits an exhalation which warns the strong and makes the weak giddy. Gwynplaine was experiencing this mysterious discomfort.

Dilemmas which were at once, both stubborn and fleeting, floated around him. Sin, persistent in offering itself, was taking shape. To-morrow, midnight, London Bridge, the page! Should he go? "Yes!" cried the flesh. "No!" cried the soul.

However, we must say, strange as it may seem at first, he never once put the question: "Should he go?" distinctly to himself. Reprehensible actions have reserved spots. Like brandies that are too strong, we do not drink them at one gulp. We put down the glass, we will see by-and-by, even the first drop had a very strange taste.

What was certain, was that he felt himself pushed towards the unknown.

And he shuddered. He caught a glimpse of the edge of a crumbling height. He threw himself backward, seized by terror on all sides. He closed his eyes. He made efforts to deny the reality of this adventure to himself, and to begin to doubt his reason again. That was evidently the best. The wisest thing to do, was to believe himself insane.

Fatal fever. Every man, surprised by the unforeseen, has had such tragic pulsations in his life. The observer always anxiously listens to the dull resounding blows made by the battering-ram of destiny against conscience.

Alas! Gwynplaine questioned himself. Where duty is clear, to question one's self, is to be already defeated.

Besides, one little point is worthy of notice, the effrontery of the adventure, which would have shocked a depraved man, was not apparent to him. He did not know what cynicism

was. The idea of prostitution, referred to above, did not come to him. He was not able to conceive it. He was too pure to admit complicated hypotheses. He saw nothing of this woman but her grandeur. Alas! he was flattered. His vanity was aware of nothing but his victory. In order to guess that he was the object of wantonness rather than of love, he would have needed far more cleverness than innocence possesses. Next to: "*I love thee*," he did not perceive the frightful corrective: "*I desire thee.*"

The bestial side of the goddess escaped him.

The mind may have to submit to invasions. The soul has its Vandals, evil thoughts, who come to devastate our virtue. A thousand contradictory ideas rushed upon Gwynplaine one after another, sometimes all together. Then there was silence within him. And he would lean his head on his hands, with a sort of mournful attention, as if contemplating a night landscape.

Suddenly he noticed the fact, that he was no longer thinking. His reverie had reached that dark moment when everything disappears.

He noticed too, that he had not gone home. It might have been two o'clock in the morning.

He put the letter brought by the page in his side pocket, but perceiving that it was upon his heart, he took it away from there, and thrust it, all crumpled up, in the first handy pocket of his small-clothes, then turned towards the inn, entered silently, did not wake up little Govicum who was waiting for him, fallen asleep on a table, with his arms for a pillow, closed the door, lit a candle at the inn lantern, drew the bolts, turned the key in the lock, mechanically taking all the precautions used by a man who comes home late, went up the steps of the Green-Box, crept into the old hut, which was his room, looked at Ursus who was asleep, blew out his candle, but did not go to bed.

An hour passed thus. At last, tired, and imagining that bed means sleep, he put his head on his pillow, without undressing, and made darkness the concession to close his eyes; but the storm of emotions which assailed him, had not ceased for an instant. Insomnia is the abusive treatment which night inflicts on man. Gwynplaine was suffering very much. For the first time in his life, he was not pleased with himself. Deep pain was mingled with his gratified vanity. What was he to do? Day broke. He heard Ursus rise, but did not open his eyelids. There was no truce for him, however. He pondered over

the letter. All the words seemed to come back in a sort of chaos. Under certain violent blasts within the soul, thought becomes a liquid. It enters into convulsions, it rises, and something like the dull roar of the waves issues from it. Ebb, flow, shocks, whirlings, the hesitation of the wave before the reef, hail and rain, clouds with light in their rifts, miserable tatters of useless foam, wild ascents at once crushed down, immense efforts lost, an apparition of shipwreck all around, gloom and dispersion, all this, which is in the abyss, is in man, as well. Gwynplaine was the prey of this tempest.

At the height of this anguish, with his eyelids still closed, he heard an exquisite voice, saying: "Are you asleep, Gwynplaine?" He opened his eyes with a start, and sat up. The door of the dressing-room was ajar, and Dea appeared in the opening. Her ineffable smile was in her eyes and on her lips. She stood there, charming in the unconscious serenity of her radiance. A sort of sacred moment followed. Gwynplaine gazed at her, quivering, dazzled, awakened; awakened from what? From sleep? No, from sleeplessness. It was she, it was Dea; and he at once felt at the very inmost depths of his being, the indefinable vanishing of the tempest and the sublime descent of good upon

evil; the miracle of the look from on high took place, the sweet, luminous, blind girl, without any other effort than her mere presence, dissipated all darkness within him, the curtain of cloud was drawn away from that mind, as if by an invisible hand, and,—celestial enchantment—Gwynplaine had the azure of heaven in his conscience once more. He suddenly became, by the virtue of that angel, the great, good and innocent Gwynplaine. The soul, like creation, has such mysterious confrontations; both were silent, she the light, he the abyss; she divine, he appeased; and above Gwynplaine's stormy heart, Dea shone with the mysterious inexpressible effect of a star of the sea.

II.

FROM THE AGREEABLE TO THE SEVERE

How simple a miracle is! It was the breakfast-hour in the Green-Box, and Dea had only come to know why Gwynplaine did not appear at the little morning meal.

"You!" exclaimed Gwynplaine, and all was said. He had now no other horizon, and no other vision, but the heaven where Dea was.

He who has not seen the immediate smile of the sea, after the hurricane, cannot understand such appeasements. Nothing grows calm more quickly than the abyss. This comes from the ease with which it engulfs. The human heart is like this. Not always, however.

Dea needed but to show herself, and all the light in Gwynplaine went out to meet her, and there was nothing behind the dazzled Gwynplaine but a flight of phantoms. What a pacifier adoration becomes!

A few moments later, they were seated before each other, Ursus between them, Homo

at their feet. The tea-pot, under which a little lamp blazed, was on the table. Fibi and Vinos were outside, busy attending to their duties.

Breakfast, as well as supper, was eaten in the centre compartment. From the manner in which the very narrow table was placed, Dea turned her back to the opening in the partition, which served as a door for the Green-Box.

Their knees touched. Gwynplaine poured out Dea's tea.

Dea was gracefully blowing on her cup. Suddenly, she sneezed. At that moment some smoke rose and floated over the flame of the lamp, and something like paper falling into ashes, as well. This smoke had made Dea sneeze.

"What is that?" she asked.

"Nothing," replied Gwynplaine.

And he smiled.

He had just burned the Duchess' letter.

The conscience of a loving man is the beloved woman's guardian angel.

Freed from this letter, he was strangely relieved, and Gwynplaine felt his integrity, as the eagle feels his wings.

It seemed to him as if temptation went off with that smoke, and that, at the same time with the paper, the Duchess fell into ashes.

While mingling their cups, drinking one after the other from the same, they spoke. Lovers' prattle is like the chattering of sparrows. Puerilities worthy of Mother Goose and Homer. Two loving hearts—go no further to look for poetry; and two talking kisses,—search no further for music.

"Do you know something?"

"No."

"Gwynplaine, I dreamt that we were animals and had wings."

"Wings, that means birds," whispered Gwynplaine.

"Animals, that means angels," growled Ursus.

The talk went on:

"If you were not alive, Gwynplaine" . . .

"Well?"

"Then there could be no good God."

"The tea is too hot. You will burn yourself, Dea."

"Blow on my cup."

"How beautiful you are this morning!"

"Just think! I have all sorts of things I want to tell you."

"Say them."

"I love you."

"I adore you!"

And Ursus said aside: "By heaven! these people are polite."

When one loves, even silence is exquisite. Love seems to amass itself, and then softly explode.

There was a pause, after which Dea exclaimed:

"If you only knew! in the evening when we play the piece, at the moment when my hand touches your forehead . . . Oh! you have a noble head, Gwynplaine! . . . at the moment when I feel your hair under my fingers, I shiver, I have a heavenly joy, and I say to myself: In all this world of blackness which envelops me, in that universe of solitude, in that immense dark ruin, in which I am, in that frightful trembling at myself and at everything, I have one thing to lean on, and here it is. It is he.—It is you."

"Oh! you love me," said Gwynplaine. "I, too, I have but you alone, on earth. You are everything to me. Dea, what do you want me to do? Do you wish for anything? What do you want?"

Dea answered:

"I do not know. I am happy."

"Oh!" replied Gwynplaine, "we are happy."

Ursus raised his voice severely: "Ah! you are happy. That's an infringement. I have already warned you. Ah! you are happy! Then, try to let no one see you. Occupy as

little space as possible. Happiness ought to burrow in holes. Make yourselves smaller than you are, if you can. God measures the greatness of happiness according to the lowliness of the happy. Happy people ought to hide like malefactors. Ah! so you shine, you miserable glow-worms! Zounds! you'll be trodden on, and it will serve you right. What is all this spooning? I'm no duenna, not I, whose business it is to look at lovers billing and cooing. You make me tired, with all this stuff. Go to the devil!"

And feeling that his harsh tone was softening to tenderness, he drowned this emotion in a loud grumbling snort.

"Father," said Dea, "why do you use your gruff voice?"

"Because I don't like to see any one too happy," replied Ursus.

Here, Homo echoed Ursus. A growl was heard under the lovers' feet.

Ursus bent down and put his hand on Homo's head.

"That's right, you are in a bad humor too. You growl. You bristle up your locks on your wolf's pate. You don't like all these love stories. That is because you are a sage. But all the same, hold your tongue. You have spoken, you have given your opinion; good; now be silent."

The wolf growled anew.

Ursus looked under the table.

"Peace now, Homo! Come, philosopher, don't insist."

But the wolf sat up, and showed his teeth in the direction of the door.

"Well, what is the matter with you?" said Ursus.

And he caught Homo by the skin of the neck.

Inattentive to the wolf's snarling, all engrossed by her thoughts, and enjoying the sound of Gwynplaine's voice within herself, Dea was silent, in that sort of ecstasy peculiar to the blind, which seems, at times, to give them an inner song to listen to, and to replace the light they lack, by some ideal music. Blindness is a subterranean vault where one can hear the deep eternal harmonies.

While Ursus bent his head to remonstrate with Homo, Gwynplaine had raised his eyes.

He was about to drink a cup of tea, and did not drink it; he put it down on the table with the slow movement of a relaxed spring, his fingers remained open, and he was motionless with fixed eyes, not even breathing.

A man was standing behind Dea, in the doorway.

He was dressed in black, with a judicial cloak. His wig came down to his eyebrows,

and he held an iron staff with a carved crown at each end, in his hand.

This staff was short and massive.

Imagine Medusa thrusting her head in between two branches in Paradise.

Ursus, who had felt the shock of a newcomer, and who had raised his head without loosing his hold on Homo, recognized this redoubtable personage.

He quivered from head to foot.

He whispered to Gwynplaine:

"It is the Wapentake."

Gwynplaine remembered.

He was about to utter an exclamation of surprise. He repressed it.

The iron staff ending in a crown at each extremity was the iron-weapon.

It was from the iron-weapon, upon which the city officers of justice took the oath when they entered upon their duties, that the old Wapentakes of the English police drew their qualification.

Beyond the man in the wig, the frightened inn-keeper could be seen in the shadow.

The man, without saying a word, and personifying that *Muta Themis* of the old charts, lowered his right arm above the radiant Dea, and touched Gwynplaine's shoulder with the iron staff, while, with the thumb of his left hand, he pointed behind him to the door of

the Green-Box. This double gesture all the more imperious for its silence, meant: "Follow me."

Pro, signo exeundi, sursum trahe, says the Norman register.

The individual upon whom the iron-weapon was laid, had no other right, but that of obeying. There was no reply to that mute order. The harsh English penalties threatened the refractory.

Under this rigid touch of the law, Gwynplaine felt a shock, then remained as if petrified.

If instead of having been simply touched on the shoulder by the iron staff, he had been violently struck on the head by it, he would not have been more stunned. He saw himself summoned to follow the police officer. But why? He could not understand.

On his side, Ursus thrown into a painful anxiety, fancied he saw something rather distinctly. He recalled the jugglers and the preachers, his rivals; the denunciation of the Green-Box; the wolf, that delinquent, and his own affair with the three inquisitors of Bishopsgate; and who knows?—perhaps, but this was frightful—Gwynplaine's unbecoming and factious talk about the royal authority. He trembled violently.

Dea smiled.

Neither Gwynplaine nor Ursus said a word. Both had the same thought: not to alarm Dea. Perhaps the wolf thought as they did, for he ceased growling. It is true, that Ursus did not loose his hold.

Besides, Homo was very prudent, at times. Who has not remarked certain intelligent anxieties in animals?

Perhaps, in as far as a wolf can understand men, he felt himself proscribed.

Gwynplaine rose.

No resistance was possible. Gwynplaine knew it, he remembered Ursus' words, and no question could be made.

He remained standing before the Wapentake.

The Wapentake raised the weapon from Gwynplaine's shoulder, drew it back towards himself, and held it straight in the position of command, a police attitude, understood by every one at that time, and which signified the following order:

"Let this man and no one else, follow me. All remain where you are. Silence."

No spectators. The police have always had a taste for this kind of arrest.

This sort of seizure was termed "sequestration of the person."

With a single movement, and like a piece of mechanism pivoting on itself, the Wapentake turned his back, and with grave and

authoritative steps went towards the door of the Green-Box.

Gwynplaine looked at Ursus.

Ursus went through the following pantomime: he shrugged his shoulders, held his elbows near his hips and spread out his hands, raised his eyebrows in chevron shape, all of which signifies: "Submission to the unknown."

Gwynplaine looked at Dea. She was musing. She continued to smile.

He laid the tips of his fingers on his lips, and wafted her an ineffable kiss.

Ursus relieved of a certain quantity of terror by the sight of the Wapentake's back, seized the moment to whisper to Gwynplaine:

"On your life, do not speak before you are questioned!"

Gwynplaine, with the same care not to make a noise, that one takes in a sick room, unhooked his hat and cloak from the partition, wrapped the cloak about him up to his eyes, pulled the hat down on his forehead; not having gone to bed, he still had his working clothes on and his leather cape about his neck; he looked once more at Dea; the Wapentake on reaching the outer door of the Green-Box, raised his staff and began to go down the little steps; then Gwynplaine followed as if this man were drawing him by an invisible chain; Ursus watched

Gwynplaine go out of the Green-Box; at this moment the wolf set up a plaintive growl, but Ursus stopped him, and told him in a whisper: "He is coming back."

In the yard, Master Nicless hushed the terrified exclamations of Vinos and Fibi, with a gesture, which was at once both servile and imperious, as they gazed with distress at Gwynplaine being led away, and at the sad-colored garments and the iron staff of the Wapentake.

The two girls were two petrifactions. They looked like stalactites in their attitudes.

Govicum, perfectly bewildered, stared, open-mouthed out of a half-opened window.

The Wapentake preceded Gwynplaine by a few steps, without turning around and without looking at him, with that icy tranquility, which the certainty of being the law, gives.

In tomb-like silence, the two men went through the yard, crossed the dark tap-room of the inn, and stepped out into the square. There were a few persons grouped before the inn door, and the justice of the quorum at the head of a squad of police. These inquisitive idlers, amazed and dumbfounded, fell back, and stood in line, with the customary English discipline, before the constable's staff; the Wapentake went in the direction of the little streets, then called Little Strand, which ran along the Thames; and Gwynplaine having

at his right and left a double line of the justice of the quorum's men, slowly moved away from the inn, pale, without a gesture, without any other movement than the steps he made, covered with his long cloak as by a shroud, and walking mutely behind the taciturn man, like a statue following a spectre.

III.

LEX, REX, FEX

An arrest without an explanation, which would greatly astonish an Englishman to-day, was a very frequent method of police procedure in Great Britain in those days. It was resorted to particularly for those delicate things for which *letters de cachet* are provided in France, and in spite of the *habeas corpus*, was employed up to George II.'s time, and one of the accusations against which Walpole had to defend himself, was that he either had, or had permitted, Neuhoff to be arrested in this manner. The accusation had, probably, little foundation, for Neuhoff, King of Corsica, was imprisoned by his creditors.

These silent seizures, which the Holy Fehmgericht in Germany had made much use of, were admitted by the Germanic custom, which rules one-half of the old English laws, and, in certain cases, recommended by the Norman custom, which rules the other half. The chief of police of Justinian's palace, was called "the imperial silencer," *silentiarius imperialis*.

The English magistrates who practised this kind of seizure, were supported by numerous Norman texts: *Canes latrant, sergentes silent. —Sergenter agere, id est tacere.* They quoted Lundulphus Sagax, paragraph 16:—*Facit imperator silentium.* They quoted King Philip's chart of 1307: *Multos tenebimus bastonerios qui, obmutescentes, sergentare valeant.* They quoted the statutes of Henry I., of England, Chapter LIII.: *Surge signo jussus. Taciturnior esto. Hoc est esse en captione regis.* They took advantage especially of the following prescription, considered as being part of the old feudal franchises of England. "Under the viscounts are the sergeants of the sword, who must virtuously punish with the sword all those who follow bad company, men defamed by any crime, fugitives and outlaws . . . . and are so vigorously and discreetly to apprehend them, that good people who are peaceable may be peaceably guarded, and that evil-doers may be affrighted." To be thus arrested, was to be seized "by the blade of the sword." (*Vetus Consuetudo Normanniæ*, M. S. 1. part. Sect. I. Chap. II.) The jurisconsults further referred to the chapter "*Servientes Spathæ, in Charta Ludovici Hutini pro Normannis.*" The *servientes spathæ*, in the gradual approach of Low Latin to our idioms have become *sergentes spadæ.*

The silent arrests were the reverse of the hue and cry arrests, and showed that it was best to be silent until certain obscurities were cleared up.

They signified: Special questions.

They indicated a certain amount of state policy in the action of the police.

The legal term, "private" which means *with closed doors*, was applied to arrests of this kind.

It was in this way that Edward III. had, according to some chroniclers, caused Mortimer to be seized in his mother's, Isabella of France's, bed. Still we may doubt this, for Mortimer sustained a siege in his city before being taken.

Warwick, the King-maker, liked to practise this mode of "trapping people."

Cromwell employed it, especially in Connaught; and with this precaution of silence, Trailie-Arcklo, a relative of the Earl of Ormond, was arrested in Kilmacaugh.

These seizures, by the mere beckoning of justice, represented the summons to appear, rather than a warrant of arrest.

At times, it was only a process of investigation, and even implied, by the silence imposed on every one, a certain degree of consideration for the person seized.

For the people, however, who were unfamiliar with these nice distinctions, they were particularly terrifying.

England, it must not be forgotten, was not in 1705, nor even very much later, what she is in our days. Everything was very confused and at times very oppressive. Daniel Defoe, who had had a taste of the pillory, somewhere characterizes the social order of England with these words: "The iron hands of the law." There was not only the law, there were arbitrary decisions. We have but to recall Steele driven out of Parliament, Locke driven from his chair; Hobbes and Gibbon forced to flee; Charles Churchill, Hume and Priestly persecuted; John Wilkes sent to the Tower. The list would be a long one, if we were to enumerate the victims of the statute of *seditious libel.* The Inquisition had spread itself, in a measure, all over Europe; its police methods founded a system. A monstrous outrage upon all rights was possible in England; one has but to remember the *Gazetier Cuirassé.* In the very middle of the eighteenth century, Louis XV. had the writers who displeased him, kidnapped in Piccadilly. It is true that George II. seized the Pretender in the very midst of the Opera House in France. Those were two very long arms; the King of France's reached as far as London, and the

King of England's as far as Paris. Such were the liberties.

We may add, that they liked to execute persons in the inside of prisons; a sort of sleight-of-hand mingled with torture; a hideous expedient, to which England is now returning; thus giving the world the singular spectacle of a great nation, who, wishing to ameliorate, chooses the worse, and while having the past on one side, and progress on the other, before it, mistakes the two, and takes night for day.

IV.

URSUS ACTS AS A SPY ON THE POLICE

As we have said, according to the very rigid police laws of the time, the summons to an individual to follow the Wapentake, implied, to every other person present, the command not to stir.

Some inquisitive persons, however, were determined, and accompanied the procession, which led Gwynplaine off, at a distance.

Ursus was among them.

Ursus was as petrified as any one has the right to be. But Ursus had been so often assailed by the surprises of a wandering life, and by the malice of unexpected things, that like a man-of-war, he could give the command for action, which calls all the crew to their battle posts; that is, he could call upon all his intelligence.

He hastened to throw off his petrifaction, and began to reflect. The question was not to be excited, but to face circumstances.

To face circumstances, is the duty of every one who is not an idiot.

Not to try to understand, but to act. Ursus at once questioned himself.

What was there to be done?

When Gwynplaine had left, Ursus found himself placed between two fears: the fear for Gwynplaine, which told him to follow; the fear for himself, which told him to stay behind.

Ursus had a fly's intrepidity and a sensitive plant's impassibility. His trembling was indescribable. However, he made up his mind heroically, and determined to brave the law and follow the Wapentake, being so anxious as to what might happen to Gwynplaine.

He must have been very much frightened to have had so much courage.

To what acts of valor will fright not drive a hare!

The bewildered chamois leaps precipices. To be frightened into imprudence, is one of the forms of terror.

Gwynplaine had been carried off rather than arrested. The police operation had been executed so rapidly that the fair-ground, which, indeed, was but little frequented at this hour of the morning, had hardly been excited. Scarcely any one in the Tarrinzeau-Field booths, had any idea that the Wapentake

had come to fetch the Laughing Man. Hence the absence of a crowd.

Thanks to his cloak and slouched felt hat, which almost met on his face, Gwynplaine could not be recognized by those he passed.

Before going out to follow Gwynplaine, Ursus took a precaution. He took Master Nicless, the boy Govicum, Fibi and Vinos aside, and enjoined the most absolute silence as regarded Dea, who was ignorant of all this; that they should take care, not to breathe a word, which might let her suspect what had happened; that they should explain the absence of both Gwynplaine and Ursus by business connected with the Green-Box; that besides, it would soon be time for her midday nap; and that he, Ursus, would be back, before Dea would awaken, with Gwynplaine; all this being but a misunderstanding, a mistake, as they say in England; that it would be very easy for Gwynplaine and for him, to enlighten the magistrates and the police; that they would give undoubted proofs of the error, and that they would both return, directly. Above all, that nobody was to say anything to Dea. These instructions given, he left.

Ursus could follow Gwynplaine without being noticed. Although he kept at the greatest possible distance, he managed not to

lose sight of him. Boldness while on watch, is the bravery of the timid.

After all, and however solemn the formalities may have been, perhaps Gwynplaine was only summoned to appear before a police magistrate for some unimportant violation of the law.

Ursus said to himself that this question was going to be settled at once.

The matter would be cleared up, under his very eyes, by the direction the squad, leading off Gwynplaine, would take, when it reached the limits of Tarrinzeau-Field, and came to the entrance of the lanes of the Little Strand.

If it turned to the left, it was taking Gwynplaine to the Town-Hall of Southwark. Then there would be little to fear; some slight municipal offence, an admonition from the magistrate, two or three shillings fine, then Gwynplaine would be discharged, and the performance of *Chaos Conquered* would take place that very evening, as usual. Nobody would have noticed anything.

If the squad turned to the right, it was serious.

There were severe places on that side.

At the moment when the Wapentake, leading the two files of prison-guards between whom Gwynplaine was walking, reached the

little lanes, Ursus, panting, gazed. There are moments when man's whole existence centres in his eyes.

Which side were they going to turn?

They turned to the right.

Ursus, staggering with fright, leaned against a wall, so as not to fall.

Nothing is more hypocritical than the words we say to ourselves: "I want to know how matters stand." At heart, we do not want to know at all. We are dreadfully afraid. The anguish is mingled with a dim effort not to get the desired information. We do not confess it, but we would like to draw back, and when we have gone forward, we reproach ourselves for having done so.

That was what Ursus did. He thought with a shudder:

Things are going wrong. I would have known that soon enough. What am I doing here, following Gwynplaine?

As man is nothing but inconsistency, he had no sooner made this reflection, than he quickened his steps, and overcoming his anxiety, hastened, so as to get nearer the squad, and so as not to lose the clew between Gwynplaine and himself, Ursus, in the labyrinth of Southwark's streets.

The police escort could not move quickly on account of its solemnity.

The Wapentake headed it.

The justice of the quorum closed it.

This order required a certain degree of slowness.

All the majesty possible for a subaltern official shone out in the justice of the quorum. His costume was something between the splendid accoutrement of an Oxford Doctor of Music, and the sober black gown of a Cambridge Doctor of Divinity. He wore the dress of a gentleman under a long *godebert*, which is a mantle lined with Norwegian hare-skins. He was half Gothic and half modern, having a wig like Lamoignon, and great sleeves like Tristan L'Hermite. His full round eye rested on Gwynplaine with an owl's stare. He walked with a cadenced step. No fiercer old fellow could have been seen.

Ursus, who for a moment had lost his way in the tangled skein of lanes, managed, near Saint Mary Overy, to overtake the police escort, which had been detained in the churchyard by a fight between children and dogs, a common incident of London streets; *dogs and boys*, say the old police registers, which put the dogs before the boys.

A man taken before a magistrate by policemen, being, after all, a very common event, and every one having some business of his own, the idle followers had dispersed. No

one had remained on Gwynplaine's track, except Ursus.

They passed before the two chapels facing each other, the Recreative Religionists and the Hallelujah League, two sects of the period, which still exist.

Then the procession wound from lane to lane, choosing by preference those roads which were not yet built upon, the rows in which grass grew, and deserted lanes, and made many a zigzag.

At last it stopped.

They were in an extremely narrow alley. There were no houses, except two or three hovels at the entrance. This alley was formed by two walls; the one on the left, was low, the other, on the right, was high. The high wall was black, of Saxon masonry work, with battlements, scorpions and squares of heavy gratings over narrow loop-holes. Not a window; only here and there slits, which were ancient embrasures for stone-slingers and crossbowmen. At the base of the high wall, like the hole at the bottom of a rat-trap, a very low, arched wicket-gate was to be seen.

This small entrance, encased in a heavy stone arch, had a grated peep-hole, a massive knocker, a huge lock, strong and knotty hinges, a tangle of nails, an armor of plates and braces, and was more of iron than of wood.

There was no one in the lane. No shops. No people. But near by a continuous noise could be heard, as if the alley ran parallel to a torrent. There was an uproar of voices and carriages. Probably there was a great street on the other side of the black edifice, no doubt the principal street of Southwark, one end of which ran into Canterbury road, and the other led to London Bridge.

A spy on watch, would have seen nothing down the whole length of the alley, besides the escort surrounding Gwynplaine, except the wan profile of Ursus, which he risked and half-thrust forward in the shadow of the corner of a wall, peering, and yet afraid to see. He was stationed in one of the turns made by the zigzags of the street.

The squad grouped itself before the entrance.

Gwynplaine was in the centre, but now had the Wapentake with his iron staff behind him.

The justice of the quorum raised the knocker and struck three blows.

The peep-hole opened.

The justice of the quorum said: "By order of Her Majesty."

The heavy oak and iron door turned on its hinges and presented a cold and livid opening, like the entrance to a cavern. A hideous vault stretched back into the gloom.

Ursus saw Gwynplaine disappear under that.

V.

A BAD PLACE

The Wapentake entered after Gwynplaine.

Then the justice of the quorum.

Then the whole squad.

The wicket closed again.

The heavy door came back and re-fitted itself hermetically into its stone frame, without any one seeing who had opened, nor who had closed it. It seemed as if the bolts entered into their sockets of their own accord. Some of these mechanisms invented by ancient intimidation still exist in very old houses of detention. A door whose door-keeper was not to be seen. This made the threshold of the prison resemble the threshold of the tomb.

This wicket was the low door of Southwark jail.

Nothing in this worm-eaten and crabbed edifice, belied the ungracious look appropriate to a prison.

Once a pagan temple built by the old Cattieuchlans for the Mogons, who were

ancient English gods, it became a palace for Ethelwolf, and a fortress for Edward the Confessor; then was raised to the dignity of a prison in 1199 by John Lackland; such was Southwark jail. This jail, at first divided by a street, as Chenonceaux is, by a river, had been for a century or two a suburban gate; then the passage had been walled up. There are still a few prisons of this kind in England; thus in London, Newgate; at Canterbury, Westgate; at Edinburgh, Canongate. In France the Bastille was, at first, a gate.

Almost all of the jails of England presented the same aspect; a huge wall outside, a perfect hive of cells within. Nothing could be more funereal than these Gothic prisons, where the spider and justice spread their webs, and where John Howard, that ray of light, had not yet penetrated. All of them, like the old Gehenna of Brussels, might have been called Trauerberg, the hill of mourning.

In presence of these savage and merciless buildings, one felt the same anguish that was experienced by the ancient navigators before the slave hells of which Plautus speaks,—iron creaking islands, *ferricrepiditæ insulæ*, when they passed near enough to hear the clank of chains.

Southwark jail, an old place for exorcisms and torture, had at first had sorcery for its

specialty, as was indicated by these two verses, engraved on a broken stone, above the wicket,—

Sunt arreptitü vexati dæmone multo,
Est energunenus quem dæmon possidet unus.

(A host of demons vex the man possessed,
One demon tears the energumens' breast.)

Verses which make a nice distinction between the demoniac and the energumen.

Above this inscription, nailed flat against the wall, as the sign of a high court of justice, there was a stone ladder, which had formerly been of wood, but had been changed into stone by being buried in the petrifying soil of a place called Apsley-Gowis, near Woburn Abbey.

Southwark prison, now torn down, opened upon two streets, to which as a gate, it had formerly served as a communication, and had two doors: on the main street, there was the show door, reserved by the authorities, and on the lane, the other gate for the use of the rest of the living. And for the dead as well, for when a person died in jail, it was by this door that the corpse was carried out. As good a liberation as any other.

Death is a release into infinity.

It was by this rear gate that Gwynplaine had just been taken into the prison.

The lane, as we have said before, was nothing but a little pebbled road, just separating two facing walls. There is one of the same kind at Brussels, the passage called, "One Person Street." The two walls were of unequal height, the high wall was the prison, the low one was the cemetery. This low wall, the enclosure for the decay of the jail's mortuary remains was scarcely higher than the ordinary stature of a man. It was pierced by a door nearly opposite the entrance to the jail. The dead had only the trouble of crossing the street. One only needed to go along the wall some twenty steps to enter the cemetery. On the high wall a gallows ladder was fastened, and opposite, on the low wall, a death's head was carved. Neither wall cheered up the other.

VI.

WHAT KIND OF MAGISTRACY THERE WAS UNDER THE WIGS OF FORMER DAYS

Any one, who at that moment, had looked on the other side of the prison, on the side of its façade, would have seen the main street of Southwark, and could have noticed a traveling carriage, recognizable by its coach box, which we would now call a cabriolet, standing before the monumental and official gate of the jail. A circle of curious by-standers surrounded this carriage. It bore a coat-of-arms, and a personage had been seen to get out of it, who had entered the prison; probably a magistrate, the crowd conjectured; the magistrates of England, often being noblemen, and almost always having the right to bear arms. In France blazonry and the gown almost excluded each other. The Duc de Saint Simon, in speaking of the magistrates, said, "The people of that condition." In England, a nobleman is not dishonored by being a judge.

There are traveling magistrates in England.

They are called *circuit judges*, and nothing was more natural than to suppose that carriage to be the vehicle of a magistrate on the circuit. What was less natural, was that the personage supposed to be the magistrate had stepped, not from the carriage itself, but from the box, a place which is not habitually the master's seat. Another peculiar thing was, that people at that time traveled in two ways in England; by stage-coach at the rate of a shilling for every five miles, and by post, at the rate of three pence per mile, and two pence to the postilion at each posting station. A private carriage which treated itself to traveling by relays, paid as many shillings per horse and per mile, as the horseman paid pence. Now, the carriage drawn up before Southwark jail, was harnessed with four horses and had two postilions, which was a princely luxury. Finally, that which carried excitement to a high pitch and disconcerted all conjectures, was that this carriage was most carefully closed. The side panels were raised. The windows were covered with blinds; all openings by which the eye could have penetrated were masked; from the outside one could not see in, and it was probable that from within one could not see out. However, it did not seem as if there were anybody in the carriage.

Southwark being in Surrey, the prison of Surrey was under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff of the County of Surrey. These district jurisdictions were very frequent in England. Thus, for example, the Tower of London was not supposed to be situated in any county, that is to say, that, legally, it was in some manner up in the air. The Tower did not recognize any other judicial authority, except its own constable, who was entitled, *custos turris*. The Tower had its jurisdiction, its church, its court of justice, and its separate government. The authority of the *custos* or constable, extended beyond London over twenty-one hamlets. As legal singularities are grafted upon one another in Great Britain, the office of master gunner of England depended on the Tower of London.

Other legal habits seem still stranger. Thus the English Court of Admiralty consults and applies the laws of Rhodes and of Oleron (a French island which was once English).

The Sheriff of a province was a very important person. He was always a squire, and sometimes a knight. He was styled *spectabilis* in the old charters, "a man to be looked at." An intermediate title between *illustris* and *clarissimus*, less than the former, and more than the latter. Formerly, the sheriffs of the counties were chosen by the people;

but Edward II. and after him Henry VI. having reclaimed their nomination for the crown, the sheriffs had become a royal emanation. They all received their commission from his majesty, except the Sheriff of Westmoreland, whose office was hereditary, and the Sheriffs of London and of Middlesex who were elected by the livery in the Common Hall. The Sheriffs of Wales and of Chester possessed certain fiscal prerogatives. All these offices still exist in England, but, having gradually been worn by the friction of customs and ideas, they no longer bear the same physiognomy as of yore. The function of the Sheriff of the County was to escort and protect the "itinerant judges." Just as a man has two arms, he had two officers; his right arm, the deputy-sheriff, and his left arm, the justice of the quorum. The justice of the quorum, assisted by the bailiff of the hundred, called the Wapentake, apprehended, interrogated, and, under the responsibility of the Sheriff, imprisoned thieves, murderers, robbers, vagabonds and all sorts of felons for trial by the circuit judges. The distinction between the deputy-sheriff and the justice of the quorum, in their hierarchal service towards the Sheriff was, that the deputy-sheriff accompanied, and the justice of the quorum, assisted him.

The Sheriff held two courts, one fixed and central, the county-court, and one traveling court, the Sheriff-turn. Thus he represented unity and ubiquity. He could have himself assisted and informed on knotty subjects, by a sergeant of the coif, called *sergens coifae*, a sergeant-at-law, who wears a coif of white Cambray lawn, under his black skull cap. The Sheriff cleared out the prisons; when he arrived in the city of his province, he had the right of summarily sending off the prisoners, which led either to their discharge, or to their being hanged, and this was called "jail delivery." The Sheriff presented the bill of indictment to the twenty-four grand jurors; if they approved, they wrote upon it: *billa vera;* if they disapproved, they wrote *ignoramus*, then the indictment was annulled, and the Sheriff had the privilege of tearing up the bill. If, during the deliberation, a juror died, which legally acquitted the accused and rendered him innocent, the Sheriff who had the privilege of arresting the accused, had the privilege of setting him free. What caused the Sheriff to be singularly respected and feared, was that he had the authority to execute *all his majesty's orders;* a very dangerous latitude. Arbitrary power dwells in such edicts. The officers called vergers and coroners formed part of the Sheriff's escort,

and the clerks of the market lent him their assistance, and he had a very handsome following of men on horseback and servants in livery. "The Sheriff," says Chamberlayne, "is the life of Justice, of Law, and of the County."

In England, an insensible demolition is constantly pulverizing and breaking up laws and customs. Nowadays, let us impress the fact, neither the sheriff, nor the wapentake, nor the justice of the quorum, would exercise their functions as they exercised them then.

In old England there existed a certain confusion of powers, and the badly defined attributes resulted in encroachments which would be impossible to-day. The promiscuity of police and justice has ceased. The names have remained, the functions have been modified. We believe that even the word *wapentake* has changed its meaning. It used to signify a magistracy, now it signifies a territorial division. It specified the centurion, but now specifies the canton (centum).

However, at this epoch, the Sheriff of the County, combined with something more and something less, and condensed within his authority, which was at once royal and municipal, the two magistrates formerly called, Civil Lieutenant of Paris, and Lieutenant of Police, in France. The civil lieutenant of

Paris is pretty well described by this old police note: "The Civil Lieutenant does not dislike domestic quarrels, because the plunder is always for him." (July 22, 1704.) As for the lieutenant of police, a troublesome, multiple and vague person, he may be summed up in René d'Argenson, one of his best types, who, according to Saint Simon, had the three judges of Hell united on his face.

These three judges of Hell, were, as we have seen, at Bishopsgate, in London.

VII.

SHUDDERING

When Gwynplaine heard the wicket shut, and all its bolts grind, he shuddered. It seemed to him that the door which has just closed, was the door of communication between light and darkness, opening on one side on the swarm of life, and on the other on a dead world, and that now, all things, on which the sun shines, were behind him, that he had crossed the boundary of life, and that he was beyond it. His heart contracted painfully. What were they going to do with him? What did all this mean?

Where was he?

He saw nothing around him; he found himself in complete darkness. The door in closing had temporarily blinded him. The little sliding-window was closed as well as the door. Not an air-shaft, not a lantern. It was an olden time precaution. It was forbidden to light up the inner entrance to

jails, so that the new-comers could take no bearings.

Gwynplaine stretched out his hands and touched the wall on his right and his left; he was in a passage way. Little by little, that cavernous light which oozes, one knows not whence, and which floats in dark places, and to which the dilatation of the pupils adjusts itself, made him distinguish a feature here and there, and the passage sketched itself before him.

Gwynplaine, who had never had a glimpse of penal severities except through the exaggerations of Ursus, felt himself seized by a sort of dark, enormous hand. To be manipulated by the mysteries of law, is frightful. One may be brave in the presence of everything, and yet disconcerted in the presence of justice. Why? It is because man's justice is only a dim twilight, and the judge moves around there by groping his way. Gwynplaine remembered what Ursus had told him about the necessity for silence; he wanted to see Dea again; there was something in his situation that had some unknown discretionary quality, which he did not wish to irritate. Trying to explain, sometimes makes things worse. However, on the other hand, the weight of this adventure was becoming so great that he ended by yielding to it, and could not restrain the question.

"Gentlemen," he asked, "where are you leading me?"

Nobody answered him.

It was the law of silent arrest, and the Norman text is formal. *A silentiariis ostio præpositis introducti sunt.*

This silence froze Gwynplaine. Up to that time he had thought himself strong; he had sufficed to himself; to be self-sufficing, is to be powerful. He had lived in isolation, imagining that to be isolated is to be impregnable. And here, all at once he felt himself under the pressure of a hideous collective force. How could he struggle with that anonymous horror, the law? He grew faint under the enigma. An unknown sort of fear had found the weak place in his armor. And besides he had not slept, he had not eaten, had hardly dipped his lips in a cup of tea. He had had a sort of delirium all night and the fever was still upon him. He was thirsty; perhaps hungry. A discontented stomach interferes with everything. Ever since the previous night all sorts of incidents had assailed him. The emotions which tortured him, sustained him; without the hurricane the sail would be a rag. But he felt that utter weakness of the rag which the wind swells until it rends it, within him. He felt himself sinking. Was he going to fall senseless to the

ground? To faint, is woman's resource and man's humiliation. He stiffened himself, but he trembled.

He had the sensation one has when losing all footing.

VIII.

GROANING

They began to move on.

They went forward in the passage.

There was no preliminary recording. No office with registers. The prisons of those days were not given to documenting. They were satisfied with closing on you, often without knowing why. To be a prison and to hold prisoners, sufficed them.

The procession had been obliged to lengthen out and take the shape of the corridor. They walked almost in single file; first the Wapentake, then Gwynplaine, then the justice of the quorum; then the constables moving as a body, and blocking up the corridor behind Gwynplaine like a plug. The passage narrowed; now Gwynplaine touched the wall with both his elbows; the vaulting overhead made of pebbles imbedded in cement, had projecting granite coves, at intervals, that choked the way; one had to stoop in order to pass; running would have been impossible in that

corridor; flight would have been obliged to walk slowly; this intestinal canal made all sorts of turns; all entrails are tortuous, those of a prison, as well as those of man; here and there, now to the right, now to the left, square, heavily-grated openings in the wall, permitted glimpses of staircases, some leading up, others plunging down. They reached a closed door, it opened, they passed through, it closed again. Then they came to a second door, which allowed them to pass, then a third, which turned on its hinges in the same way. These doors opened and closed of themselves, as it seemed. No one was to be seen. In proportion as the passage grew narrower, the vault became lower, and at length they could no longer walk but with bowed heads. The wall sweated; drops of water fell from the vaulting; the slabs paving the corridor, were as slimy as intestines. The kind of diffused pallor which took the place of light, was becoming more and more opaque; there was not enough air. And what was singularly lugubrious, was that the way led downwards.

It required attention to notice that they were going down. In darkness, a gentle slope is ominous. Nothing is as dangerous as dark things which are reached by insensible slopes.

To go downwards, is to enter in the terrors of the unknown.

How long did they walk thus? Gwynplaine could not have told.

When passed under the rolling-mills of anguish, minutes grow immeasurably long.

Suddenly they halted.

The darkness was dense.

The corridor had become somewhat wider.

Gwynplaine heard a noise, quite near him, of which the sound of a Chinese gong alone, could give any idea; something like a blow struck on the diaphragm of the abyss.

It was the Wapentake who had just struck an iron plate with his staff.

This plate was a door.

Not a door that turned on its hinges, but a door that could be raised and lowered. Very like a portcullis.

There was a harsh grating sound in a groove, and Gwynplaine suddenly had a square of light before his eyes.

The iron plate had been hoisted into a slit in the vaulting, just as the panel of a mouse-trap is raised.

An opening had appeared.

This light was not daylight; but a mere glimmer. Yet for Gwynplaine's extremely dilated pupil, this pale and sudden gleam, seemed, at first, like the shock of a flash of lightning.

It took him some time before he could see anything. It is as hard to see when dazzled, as it is in darkness.

Then, by degrees, his pupils adjusted themselves to the light, as they had adjusted themselves to the darkness; he could finally distinguish objects; the light, which had at first seemed so vivid, calmed down on his eye and became livid; he risked a look into the yawning opening before him, and what he saw was frightful.

At his feet, some twenty high, narrow, worn, nearly vertical steps, without any railing on either side, a sort of stone ridge, like the side of a wall bevelled into a staircase, entered and sank into a very deep cellar. The steps went to the bottom of it.

This cellar was round, with cross-arched vaulting, and the arches were inclined, on account of the defective level of the imposts, a dislocation peculiar to all crypts on which very heavy buildings have gradually settled.

The sort of opening which served as a door, which the iron plate had revealed, and at which the stairs ended, was cut into the vaulting, so that from that height the eye could plunge into the cavern as into a well.

It was vast, and if it was the bottom of a well, it must have been a Cyclopean well. The idea which the old word "dungeon

den" awakens could be applied to this one only on condition that it was imagined as a lion's or a tiger's den.

The cavern was neither flagged nor paved. Its flooring was the wet, cold earth peculiar to deep places.

In the middle of the cavern, four low and badly proportioned columns supported a heavily arched porch, whose four mouldings, in meeting on the interior of the porch formed something like the inside of a mitre. This porch, like the pinnacles under which sarcophagi were formerly placed, rose to the vaulting and made a sort of central chamber in the cavern, if one can call by the name of chamber, a compartment which is open on all sides, having four pillars instead of four walls.

From the keystone of the vault of the porch there hung a round copper lantern, barred like a prison window. This lantern cast a wan light, checkered by bars of shadow, on the pillars, on the vaultings, and on the circular wall, which could be dimly seen behind the pillars.

This was the light that had at first dazzled Gwynplaine. Now it was no more than an indistinct redness.

There was no other light in this cavern. Neither window, nor door, nor air-hole.

Between the four pillars, precisely below the lantern, at the spot where there was the most light, a white and terrible outline lay spread flat upon the ground.

It was laid on its back. One could see a head with closed eyes, a body, whose trunk disappeared under some unknown shapeless heap, four limbs united to the trunk in the shape of Saint Andrew's cross and drawn towards the four pillars, by four chains fastened to the feet and hands. These chains ended in iron rings at the foot of each column. This form, now motionless in the atrocious posture of quartering, was as livid and as icy as a corpse. It was naked; and it was a man.

Gwynplaine, standing at the head of the staircase, gazed, as if petrified.

Suddenly he heard a groan of agony.

This corpse was alive.

Quite near this spectre, in one of the arches of the portico, at each side of a great arm-chair raised on a large flat stone, two men dressed in long black gowns stood erect, and in the arm-chair there sat an old man, wrapped in a red gown, pale, motionless, ominous, holding a bunch of roses in his hand.

This bunch of roses would have enlightened any one less ignorant than Gwynplaine. The right of judging while holding a bunch

of flowers, showed the magistrate to be both a royal and municipal one. The Lord Mayor of London still sits in judgment in this way. To assist the judges in deciding was the function of the first roses of the season.

The old man seated in the arm-chair was the Sheriff of the County of Surrey.

He had the majestic rigidity of a Roman clothed with Augustan honors.

The arm-chair was the only seat in the cavern.

Next to the arm-chair, there was a table covered with papers and books, on which the Sheriff's long, white wand was placed.

The men standing at the Sheriff's right and left hand were two doctors, one of mèdicine, the other of laws; the latter recognizable by his sergeant-at-law coif over his wig. Both wore black gowns, one a judge's, the other a physician's. These two kind of men wear mourning for the deaths they cause.

Behind the Sheriff, on the edge of step made by the flat stone, a scrivener in a round wig, sat crouching, pen in hand, in the attitude of a man ready to write, his writing-case was near him, on the ground, a pasteboard record-case on his knees, and a sheet of parchment on the case.

The scrivener was of the kind called *bag-keepers;* which was shown by a bag which

was before him at his feet. These bags, formerly used in law-suits were called "justice bags."

A man entirely clothed in leather, was leaning against one of the pillars, with his arms crossed. He was the executioner's assistant.

These men seemed to be under a spell in their funereal positions around the chained man. Not one of them either moved or spoke.

A horrible calm rested upon it all.

What Gwynplaine was looking at, was a penal cavern. Such places abounded in England. The crypt of Beauchamp Tower served for this purpose a long time, as well as the vault of the Lollard's Prison. There was, and one can still see in London, the underground place of this kind called "the vaults of Lady Place." In this latter room, there is a fire-place in case irons needed to be heated.

All the prisons of King John's time, and Southwark jail was one of them, had their subterranean torture chamber.

What follows frequently took place in England, and could, at need, in criminal proceedings, take place there to-day; for all those laws still exist. England presents the curious spectacle of a barbarous code living on the best terms with liberty. The domestic relations, we must say, are excellent.

Some mistrust, however, would not be out of place. If a crisis should come, a penal revival might not be impossible. English legislation is a tamed tiger. She strokes with a velvety paw, but her claws are still there.

It is wise to cut the law's nails.

Law almost ignores equity. On one side there is penalty, on the other humanity. Philosophers protest; but it will be long yet, before man's justice unites with justice.

Respect for the law; that is the English word. In England the laws are so much venerated, that they are never abrogated. The English get around this veneration by not carrying them out. An old law falls into desuetude like an old woman; but they do not kill one venerable antiquity any more than the other. People merely let them alone, that is all. They are at liberty to think themselves ever young and fair. They let them dream that they exist. This politeness is called respect.

Norman law practice is very wrinkled; that does not prevent more than one English judge from ogling it. They lovingly preserve an atrocious antiquity, if it be Norman. What is more barbarous or savage than the gibbet? In 1867, a man (the Fenian Burke, May, 1867) was condemned to be cut in four

quarters which were to be offered to a woman, the Queen.

Besides, torture has never existed in England. History says so. The assurance of history is beautiful!

Matthew of Westminster declares — that "the most merciful and kind Saxon law" did not punish criminals by death, and he adds, "it limited itself to cutting off their noses, to putting out their eyes, and to unsexing them." That was all!

Gwynplaine at the head of the staircase, was haggard, and began to tremble in every limb. He had every sort of chill. He tried to remember what crime he could have committed. The Wapentake's silence was followed by a vision of torture. It was a step forward, but a tragic one. He saw the dark legal enigma, under which he was caught, growing more and more obscure.

The human form on the ground groaned a second time.

Gwynplaine thought he felt some one gently push him by the shoulder.

It was done by the Wapentake.

Gwynplaine understood that he was to go down.

He obeyed.

He went down the staircase step by step. They were very shallow, and eight or nine

inches high. Besides, there was no railing. One could only go down cautiously. Behind Gwynplaine, and at a distance of two steps, came the Wapentake, holding his iron-weapon erect, and behind the Wapentake, the justice of the quorum followed at the same interval of distance.

In going down those steps Gwynplaine felt a nameless engulfment of all hope. It was a sort of death, step by step. Each step he took, extinguished some light within him. He reached the foot of the staircase growing paler and paler.

The sort of conquered ghost which was chained to the four pillars continued to groan.

A voice in the shadow said: "Come forward."

It was the Sheriff addressing Gwynplaine.

Gwynplaine took a step.

"Nearer," said the voice.

Gwynplaine took another step.

"Quite close," continued the Sheriff.

The justice of the quorum murmured in Gwynplaine's ear, so gravely that the whisper was solemn:

"You are before the Sheriff of the County of Surrey."

Gwynplaine went forward as far as the tortured man whom he saw stretched out in the

centre of the vault. The Wapentake and the justice of the quorum remained where they were and let Gwynplaine move forward alone.

When Gwynplaine, on coming under the portico, saw the wretched object close by, which, so far, he had only seen at a distance, and which was really a living man, his fright became terror.

The man bound to the ground was absolutely naked, except for that hideously modest rag, which might be called the fig-leaf of torture, and which was the *succingulum* of the Romans, and the *christipannus* of the Goths, from which the old Gallic jargon made the word *cripagne*. Jesus, naked on the cross, had nothing on but that strip of cloth.

The frightful sufferer whom Gwynplaine was looking at, seemed to be a man between fifty and sixty years of age. He was bald. White hairs bristled on his chin. His eyes were shut, his mouth open. All his teeth could be seen. His thin and bony face was very like a death's head. His arms and legs held down by the chains to the four stone posts, formed the letter X. On his chest and abdomen there was a sheet of iron on which five or six large stones were heaped. His groan was at times a sigh, and again, a roar.

The Sheriff without laying aside his bunch of roses, took his white wand from the table with his free hand, and raised it saying:

"Obedience to Her Majesty."

After which he replaced the wand on the table.

Then, with the long-drawn slowness of a knell, without a gesture, remaining as immovable as the victim, the Sheriff raised his voice.

He said:

"Man, who are here bound in chains, listen to the voice of justice for the last time. You have been taken out of your cell and brought to this jail. Duly questioned in the prescribed forms, *formaliis verbis pressus*, without consideration of the readings and communications which were made to you, and which are to be renewed, inspired by a wicked and perverse spirit of obstinacy, you have shut yourself up in silence, and have refused to reply to the judge. This is a detestable license, and constitutes among the deeds punishable by cashlit, the crime and misdemeanor of overhernesse."

The sergeant of the coif standing at the Sheriff's right, interrupted, and said with an indifference which had something indescribably funereal about it:

"*Overhernessa.* Laws of Alfred and of Godrun, chapter six."

The Sheriff resumed:

"The law is venerated by all except the robbers who infest the woods where the hinds bring forth their young."

Like one bell after another the sergeant said:

"*Qui faciunt vastum in foresta ubi damæ solent founinare.*"

"He who refuses to answer the magistrate," said the Sheriff, "is suspected of all vices. He is considered capable of all evil."

The sergeant interposed:

"*Prodigus, devorator, profusus, salax, ruffianus, ebriosus, luxuriosus, simulator, consumptor patrimonii, elluo, ambro, et gluto.*"

"All vices," said the Sheriff, "presuppose all crimes. Who admits nothing, confesses everything. He who is silent before the judge's questions, is by his act a liar and a parricide."

"*Mendax et parricida,*" said the sergeant.

The Sheriff said:

"Man, it is not permitted to absent one's self by silence. False contempt of court wounds the law. It is like Diomedes wounding a goddess. Taciturnity in the presence of justice is a form of rebellion. Treason to justice is high treason. Nothing is bolder or more hateful. Whoever resists examination

robs truth. The law has provided for this. For similar cases, the English have always had the right of dungeons, fork and chains."

"*Anglica charta* year 1088," said the sergeant.

And with the same mechanical gravity, the sergeant added:

"*Ferrum, et fossam, et furcas, cum aliis libertatibus.*"

The Sheriff continued:

"Therefore, man, since you have not been willing to break your silence, although of sane mind, and perfectly informed of what justice asks of you, since you are diabolically refractory, it was necessary to give you the punishment of Gehenna, and according to the terms of the criminal statute you have been put to the test of the torture called *la peine forte et dure*. This is what has been done to you. The law demands that I should authentically inform you of it. You have been brought to this underground dungeon, you have been stripped of your garments, you have been laid on your back, naked on the ground, your four limbs have been stretched and bound to the four columns of the law, a sheet of iron has been laid on your belly, and as many stones as you could bear have been laid on your body. 'And even more,' says the law."

"*Plusque*," affirmed the sergeant.

The Sheriff went on:

"In this position, and before prolonging the trial, I, Sheriff of the County of Surrey, summoned you again to answer and speak, and you satanically persevered in your silence, although under the power of constraints, chains, stocks, shackles and irons."

"*Attachiamenta legalia*," said the sergeant.

"Upon your refusal and hardness," said the Sheriff, "it being but just that the obstinacy of the law should equal the obstinacy of the criminal, the trial has continued, as is commanded by the texts and the edicts. The first day you were given nothing either to eat or to drink."

"*Hoc est super jejunare*," said the sergeant.

There was a momentary silence. The frightful hissing respiration of the man under the heap of stones could be heard.

The sergeant-at-law completed his interruption:

"*Adde augmentum abstinentiæ ciborum diminutione. Consuetudo britannica*, article five hundred and four."

These two men, the Sheriff and the sergeant alternated; nothing could have been gloomier than this imperturbable monotony; the doleful

voice replied to the sinister voice; it was as if the priest and the deacon of torture, were celebrating the ferocious Mass of law.

The Sheriff began again:

"The first day you were given nothing either to eat or to drink. The second day you were given something to eat but nothing to drink; three morsels of barley bread were put between your teeth. The third day you were given something to drink, but nothing to eat. They poured into your mouth, at three different times, and from three glasses, a pint of water taken from the gutter of the prison drain. The fourth day has come. It is to-day. Now, if you still refuse to answer, you will be left there until you die. Justice demands it."

The sergeant, always ready for his cue, approved:

"*Mors rei homagium est bonæ legi.*"

"And while you feel yourself lamentably dying," continued the Sheriff, "no one will assist you, not even if the blood should burst from your throat, your beard and your armpits, and all the openings in your body, from your mouth to your loins."

"*A throtebolla,*" said the sergeant, "*et pabu et subhircis, et a grugno usque ad cruppo-num.*"

The Sheriff went on:

"Man, take heed. For the consequences concern you. If you renounce your execrable silence, and confess, you will only be hanged, and you will have a right to the *meldefeoh*, which is a sum of money."

"*Damnum confitens*," said the sergeant, "*habeat te meldefeoh. Leges Ina*, chapter twenty."

"Which said sum," repeated the Sheriff, "will be paid to you in doitkins, suskins and galihalpens, the only case in which this coin can be used, according to the terms of the statute of abolition, third year of Henry V., and you will have the right and privilege of *scortum ante mortum*, and will then be strangled on the gibbet. Such are the advantages of confession. Will it please you to reply to justice?"

The Sheriff was silent and waited. The victim remained motionless.

The Sheriff began again:

"Man, silence is a refuge in which there is more risk than safety. Obstinacy is damnable and villainous. Whoever is silent before justice is a felon to the crown. Do not persist in this unfilial disobedience. Think of Her Majesty. Do not resist our gracious Queen. When I speak to you, answer her. Be a loyal subject."

The victim groaned.

The Sheriff started off again:

"Now, after the first seventy-two hours of trial, here we are at the fourth day. Man, this is the decisive day. It is for the fourth day that the law appoints the confrontation."

"*Quarta die, frontem ad frontem adduce,*" muttered the sergeant.

"The wisdom of the law," resumed the Sheriff, "has chosen this extreme hour, so as to have what our ancestors called, the 'judgment by mortal cold,' as that is the moment when men are believed on their mere yea and nay."

The sergeant-at-law added: "*Judicium pro frodmortell, quod homines credensi sint per suum ya et per suum na.* Charter of King Athelstan. Volume first, page one hundred and seventy-three."

There was a moment's pause, then the Sheriff inclined his severe face towards the sufferer.

"Man, lying there upon the ground" . . .

And he made a pause.

"Man, do you hear me?" he cried.

The man did not move.

"In the name of the law, open your eyes," said the Sheriff.

The man's eyelids remained closed.

The Sheriff turned towards the physician standing at his left.

"Doctor, give your diagnosis."

"*Probe, da diagnosticum,*" said the sergeant.

The physician stepped down from the flagstone with magisterial rigidity, approached the man, bent down, put his ear close to the victim's mouth, felt his pulse at the wrist, the arm-pit and the thigh, and then rose.

"Well?" said the Sheriff.

"He still hears," said the physician.

"Does he see?" asked the Sheriff.

The physician replied: "He can see."

Upon a sign from the Sheriff the justice of the quorum and the Wapentake came forward. The Wapentake placed himself near the victim's head; the justice of the quorum stopped behind Gwynplaine.

The physician fell back a step between the pillars.

Then the Sheriff raising his bunch of roses as a priest raises his sprinkling-brush, addressed the sufferer in a loud voice, and became awful.

"Oh, wretched man, speak! the law entreats thee before exterminating thee. Thou wishest to seem dumb, think of the tomb, which is dumb; thou wishest to appear deaf, think of damnation which is deaf. Think of death which is worse than thou art. Consider that thou art to be abandoned in this cell. Listen, fellow-being, for I am a man! Listen, my

brother, for I am a Christian! Listen, my son, for I am an old man! Heed me, for I am the master of thy sufferings, and presently I shall be terrible. The terror of the law makes the majesty of the judge. Consider that I tremble before myself. My own power alarms me. Do not drive me to extremes. I feel myself full of the holy cruelty of punishment. Therefore, oh, unfortunate man, feel the salutary and honest fear of justice, and obey me. The hour of confrontation has come and thou must answer. Do not continue obstinate in thy resistance. Do not enter into the irrevocable. Think that it is my right to end all this. Incipient corpse, listen! Unless it is thy pleasure to expire here during hours, days and weeks, and agonize a long time in a frightful, foul and famishing agony under the weight of these stones, alone in this underground cell, abandoned, forgotten, abolished, given up as food to rats and weasels, bitten by the vermin of darkness, while men come and go, and buy and sell, and wagons roll above thy head in the street; unless it suits thee to groan without intermission in the depths of this despair, gnashing, weeping, blaspheming, without a physician to calm thy wounds, without a priest to offer the divine draught of water to thy soul; oh! unless thou wishest to

feel the frightful froth of the tomb slowly gather on thy lips, oh! then I adjure and I conjure thee to hear me! I call thee to thine own succor, have pity on thyself, do what is asked of thee, yield to justice, obey, turn thy head, open thine eyes, and say whether thou dost recognize this man!"

The sufferer did not turn his head nor open his eyes.

The Sheriff looked at both the justice of the quorum and the Wapentake in turn.

The justice of the quorum took off Gwynplaine's hat and cloak, and taking him by the shoulders, made him face the light in the direction of the chained man. Gwynplaine's face, fully lighted up, stood out in its strange relief, against all that gloom.

At the same time, the Wapentake stooped down, seized the victim's head in his two hands, turned this inert head towards Gwynplaine, and with his thumbs and forefingers opened the closed eyelids. The man's wild eyes appeared.

The victim saw Gwynplaine.

Then, raising his head himself, and opening his eyes wide, he looked at him.

He shuddered, as much as a man, who has a mountain on his chest, can shudder, and cried out: "It is he! Yes! It is he!"

And he burst into a horrible laugh.

"It is he," he repeated.

Then he let his head fall back on the ground, and closed his eyes again.

"Scrivener, write," said the Sheriff.

Gwynplaine, although terrified, had up to that time preserved an almost calm exterior. The victim's cry: "It is he!" overwhelmed him. The "Scrivener, write!" froze him. He seemed to understand that a villain was dragging him into his own fate, without making it possible for him, Gwynplaine, to guess why, and this man's incomprehensible confession was closing around him like the hinge of a pillory collar. He saw this man and himself bound to twin posts. Gwynplaine lost his foothold in this terror and began to struggle. He began to stammer incoherent, broken words, with the profound confusion of innocence, and, quivering, bewildered, beside himself, he uttered the first random cries which came to his lips, and all those words of anguish which seem like mad projectiles.

"It is not true. It is not I. I do not know that man. He cannot know me, since I do not know him. I have a performance this evening which is waiting for me. What do you want of me? I demand my liberty. And that is not all. Why was I brought to this cellar? There can be no more laws. Say at once, that there are no more laws.

My Lord Judge, I repeat that it is not I. I am innocent of all that may be said. I am sure of that. I want to go away. This is not just. There is nothing whatever in common between this man and me. You may make inquiries. My life is not a hidden thing. I was taken away as if I had been a thief. Why did they come so? How do I know who that man is? I am a wandering boy, and play farces at fairs and markets. I am the Laughing Man. Plenty of people have come to see me. We are at Tarrinzeau-Field. I have been practising my trade honestly, for the past fifteen years. I am twenty-five years old. I live at Tadcaster Inn. My name is Gwynplaine. Do me the favor to have me put out of here, Sir Judge. You ought not to take advantage of the lowly condition of the unfortunate. Have compassion on a man who has done nothing, and who is without protection and without defence. You have a poor mountebank before you."

"I have before me," said the Sheriff, "Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, Peer of England."

And rising and pointing to his arm-chair, the Sheriff added to Gwynplaine:

"My Lord, will your Lordship deign to be seated?"

BOOK FIVE

THE SEA AND FATE MOVE UNDER THE SAME BREATH

I.

THE SOLIDITY OF FRAGILE THINGS

Destiny sometimes offers us a glass of madness to drink. A hand issues from the clouds and suddenly offers us the mysterious cup in which there is an unknown intoxication.

Gwynplaine did not understand.

He looked behind him to see who was being addressed.

Too sharp a sound is not distinguishable by the ear; too acute an emotion is not apprehended by the intelligence. There is a limit of comprehension as well as of hearing.

The Wapentake and the justice of the quorum approached Gwynplaine, took his arms, and he felt himself being seated in the arm-chair whence the Sheriff had risen.

He let them do it, without trying to explain how it could be.

When Gwynplaine was seated, the justice of the quorum and the Wapentake fell back a few paces and stood erect and motionless behind the arm-chair.

Then the Sheriff laid his bunch of roses on the flagstone, put on a pair of spectacles handed him by the scrivener, and from beneath the bundles of papers which encumbered the table, he drew a sheet of parchment, that was spotted, yellow, green, gnawed and broken in places, and seemed to have been folded in very narrow folds, and one side of which was covered with writing, and standing under the light of the lantern, bringing the sheet close to his eyes, he read what follows:

"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

"This day, the twenty-ninth of January, one thousand six hundred and ninetieth year of our Lord.

"A child ten years old, has been wickedly abandoned on the desert coast of Portland, with the intention of letting him perish of hunger, cold and solitude.

"This child when two years of age, was sold by the order of His Most Gracious Majesty, King James the Second.

"This child is Lord Fermain Clancharlie, only legitimate son of Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Italy, Peer of the Kingdom of England, deceased, and of Ann Bradshaw, his wife, deceased.

"This child is heir to the possessions and titles of his father. That is why he was sold, mutilated, disfigured and made to disappear, by the will of His Most Gracious Majesty.

"This child has been brought up and trained to be a mountebank at markets and fairs.

"He was sold when two years old, after the death of the Lord his father, and ten pounds sterling were given to the King for the purchase of this child, as well as for divers concessions, tolerances and immunities.

"Lord Fermain Clancharlie, two years old, was bought by me, the undersigned, who write these lines, and mutilated and disfigured by a Fleming from Flanders, named Hardquanonne, who alone is in possession of the secrets and processes of Doctor Conquest.

"The child was destined by us to be a laughing mask. *Masca ridens.*

"For this purpose, Hardquanonne performed the operation of *Bucca fissa usque ad aures* upon him, which sets an eternal laugh upon the face.

"The child, by means known to Hardquanonne alone, having been put to sleep and made insensible during this process, is ignorant of the operation he underwent.

"He does not know that he is Lord Clancharlie.

"He answers to the name of *Gwynplaine*.

"This is on account of his extreme youth, and the weak memory he had, at the time he was bought and sold, being then hardly two years old.

"Hardquanonne is the only one who knows how to perform the operation of *Bucca fissa*, and this child is the only living creature on whom it has been performed.

"This operation is so unique and singular, that even after long years, this child, if he had grown to be an old man instead of a child, and if his black hair had become white, would immediately be recognized by Hardquanonne.

"At the time when we are writing this, Hardquanonne, who pertinently knows all these facts, and has taken part in them as their principal author, is detained in the prisons of His Highness the Prince of Orange, vulgarly called King William III. Hardquanonne has been apprehended and seized as being one of those who are called the Comprachicos or Cheylas. He is shut up in Chatham dungeon.

"It was in Switzerland, near Lake Geneva, between Lausanne and Vevey, in the very house in which his father and mother had died, that the child, according to the King's commands, was sold and delivered to us, by

the last servant of the late Lord Linnæus, said servant, dying shortly after, like his master, so that this delicate and secret affair, is no longer known to anyone now here below, unless it be by Hardquanonne, who is in a cell at Chatham, and by us, who are about to die.

"We, the undersigned, have brought up and kept the little lord, bought by us from the King, for eight years, in order to have the benefit of him for our trade.

"On this present day, fleeing from England so as not to share Hardquanonne's unlucky fate, we, out of fear and timidity, and on account of the inhibitions and penal fulminations pronounced in Parliament, abandoned the said child, Gwynplaine, who is Lord Fermain Clancharlie, at nightfall, on the coast of Portland.

"Now, we have sworn secrecy to the King, but not to God.

"This night, at sea, assailed by a severe tempest by the will of Providence, in our despair and distress, kneeling before Him who can save our lives, and who will perhaps save our souls, having nothing more to hope from men and all to fear from God, having repentance as our anchor and resource for our bad actions, resigned to die and contented if Justice above is thereby satisfied,

humble and penitent and beating our breasts, we make this declaration and confide and remit it to the furious sea, for it to use for what is best, and in obedience to God. And may the Most Holy Virgin come to our aid. Amen. And we have signed."

The Sheriff, interrupting himself, said:

"Here are the signatures. All in different hand-writings."

And he began to read again:

"Doctor Gernardus Geestemunde. Asuncion. A cross, and next to it: Barbara Fermoy, of the Isle of Tyrryf, in the Hebrides. Gaïzdorra, Captal. Giangirate. Jacques Quatourze, called the Narbonnese. Luc-Pierre Capgaroupe, from the Mahon galleys."

The Sheriff stopping again, said:

"A note written by the same hand as the text and the first signature."

And he read:

"Of the three men of the crew, the skipper having been carried away by a wave, there remain but two. And they have signed. Galdeazun. Ave Maria, thief."

The Sheriff, combining his explanations with the reading, continued:

"At the bottom of the sheet, there is written:

"'At sea, on board the *Matutina*, a Biscayan hooker, from the Gulf of Pasages.'

"This sheet," added the Sheriff, "is a parchment from the chancery office bearing the water-mark of King James the Second's reign. On the margin of the declaration, and in the same writing, there is this note: 'The present declaration is written by us, on the back of the royal order, which was given us as our exoneration for having bought the child. Let the leaf be turned over, the order will be seen.'"

The Sheriff turned over the parchment, and raised it in his right hand, exposing it to the light. A blank page was visible, if the term blank can be applied to such mouldiness, and in the middle of the page, three words were written: two Latin words, *jussu regis*, (by the King's command) and a signature: *Jeffreys*.

"*Jussu regis. Jeffreys,*" said the Sheriff, changing from a grave to a loud voice.

Gwynplaine was in the condition of a man, on whose head a tile from the palace of dreams might have fallen.

He began to speak as one speaks during unconsciousness:

"Gernardus, yes, the doctor. A sad old man. I was afraid of him. Gaïzdorra, the 'captal,' that means the chief. There were women, Asuncion and the other. And then the Provençal. That was Capgaroupe. He

used to drink out of a flat bottle on which there was a name written in red."

"Here it is," said the Sheriff.

And he placed something, that the scrivener had just drawn out the justice-bag, on the table.

It was a gourd with handles, covered with wicker. This bottle had visibly had adventures. It must have made a sojourn in the water. Shells and sea-weed adhered to it. It was encrusted and damascened by all the rusts of ocean. The neck had a tar collar around it, which showed that it had been hermetically corked. It was unsealed and open. However a sort of plug, made of a bit of tarred rope, and which had been its cork, had been put back in the opening.

"It was in this bottle," said the Sheriff, "that the declaration which has just been read, was enclosed by the people, who were about to die. This message addressed to justice, has been faithfully delivered to her by the sea."

The Sheriff made his intonation still more majestic, and continued:

"Just as Harrow-Hill is excellent for wheat, and furnishes the fine flour from which bread for the royal table is baked, just so the sea, renders England all the services it can, and when a lord is lost, finds him and brings him back."

Then he resumed:

"In fact, there is a name written in red upon this gourd."

And raising his voice, he turned towards the motionless sufferer:

"*Your* name, you malefactor, here present. For such are the mysterious ways by which truth, though swallowed up in the abyss of human actions, comes up from the depths to the surface."

The Sheriff took the gourd and held one of the sides of the sea-waif, which had probably been cleaned for the needs of justice, to the light. In the intertwinings of the wicker, a thin ribbon of red reeds could be seen, which had become blackened in places, by the action of time and water. This reed, in spite of some cracks, distinctly traced these twelve letters in the wicker: Hardquanonne.

Then the Sheriff, resuming that particular tone of voice, which resembles nothing else, and which might be termed the accent of justice, turned towards the victim:

"Hardquanonne! when, we, the Sheriff, showed, exhibited and presented this gourd, upon which there is your name, for the first time, you at once and with good grace recognized it as having belonged to you; then the tenor of the parchment which was folded and shut up in it, having been read to you, you

were not willing to say any more, and, in the hope, no doubt, that the lost child would not be found, and that you might escape punishment, you refused to reply. As a consequence of that refusal, the *peine forte et dure* was applied to you, and a second reading of the aforesaid parchment, wherein the declaration and confession of your accomplices is recorded, was made to you. In vain. To-day which is the fourth day, and the day legally demanded for confrontation, having been put in presence of him who was abandoned at Portland, the twenty-ninth of January, one thousand six hundred and ninety, your diabolical hope has vanished, and you have broken your silence and recognized your victim." . . . .

The sufferer opened his eyes, raised his head, and with a voice in which there was the strange sonority of agony, and an indescribable calmness mingled with his difficult breathing, tragically pronounced words from under the heap of stones, for each one of which, he was obliged to lift the species of tomb-lid placed upon him, and began to speak:

"I have sworn secrecy, and I have kept it as long as I could. Men of darkness are faithful men, and there is honor in hell. To-day silence has become useless. So be it. That is why I speak. Well, yes. It is he.

We did it between us, the King and I; the King by his will, I, by my art."

And looking at Gwynplaine, he added:

"Now, laugh forever."

And he himself began to laugh.

This second laugh, wilder than the first, might have been taken for a sob.

The laugh ceased, and the man lay back again. His eyelids closed.

The Sheriff, who had allowed the tortured man to speak, continued:

"All of which has been recorded."

He gave the scrivener time to write, then he said:

"Hardquanonne, according to the terms of the law, after confrontation followed by results, after the third reading of the declaration of your accomplices, henceforth confirmed by your recognition and confession, after your reiterated avowal, you are to be freed from your fetters, and remanded to await the good pleasure of Her Majesty, to be hanged as a plagiary."

"Plagiary," said the sergeant of the coif. "That is to say, buyer and seller of children. Visigothic law, book seven, section three, paragraph *Usurpaverit;* and Salic law, section forty-one, paragraph two; and Frisian law, section twenty-one, *De Plagio.* And Alexander Nequam says: '*Qui pueros vendis,*

plagiarius est tibi nonem.' (Thou who sellest children, thy name is plagiary.)"

The Sheriff placed the parchment on the table, took off his spectacles, seized his bouquet, and said: "End of the *peine forte et dure*. Hardquanonne, thank Her Majesty."

By a sign, the justice of the quorum set the man dressed in leather in motion.

This man, who was a servant of the executioner, "groom of the gibbet," as the old charts say, went to the victim, took off the stones he had upon his body, one by one, lifted up the iron sheet, which allowed the crushed ribs of the wretched man to be seen, then loosened the four bands, which bound him to the four pillars, from his wrists and ankles.

The victim, relieved from the stones and delivered from the chains, remained flat on the ground, his eyes closed, his arms and legs apart, like a crucified man taken down from the cross.

"Hardquanonne," said the Sheriff, "rise."

The victim did not move.

The groom of the gibbet took one of his hands, and let it go; the hand fell back. The other hand, when raised, fell in the same way. The executioner's servant seized one foot, then the other, the heels fell back, striking the ground. The fingers remained inert, the toes motionless. The naked feet

of a stretched-out body have something singularly bristling about them.

The physician approached, drew a little steel mirror from the pocket of his robe, and placed it in front of Hardquanonne's open mouth; then he raised his eyelids with his fingers. They did not close again. The glassy eye-balls remained fixed.

The physician stood up and said:

"He is dead."

And he added:

"He laughed, that killed him."

"It matters little," said the Sheriff. "After the confession, living or dying is merely a formality."

Then, designating Hardquanonne, by a movement of his bunch of roses, the Sheriff threw this order to the Wapentake:

"The carcass is to be carried away from here, to-night."

The Wapentake assented by a nod.

And the Sheriff added:

"The prison cemetery is opposite."

The Wapentake made another sign of comprehension.

The scrivener was writing.

The Sheriff, having his bouquet in his left hand, took his white wand in the other, placed himself directly in front of Gwynplaine, who was still seated, bowed profoundly

to him, then taking another solemn attitude, he threw back his head and looking Gwynplaine in the face, said:

"To you here present, we Philip Denzill Parsons, knight, Sheriff of the County of Surrey, assisted by Aubrey Dominick, Esq., our clerk and scrivener, and by our usual officers, duly provided with direct and special commands of Her Majesty, in virtue of our commission and the rights and duties of our charge, with the permission of the Lord-Chancellor of England, official reports having been made and recorded, in regard to the documents communicated by the Admiralty, after verification of affidavits and signatures, after declarations read and heard, after confrontation made, all statements and legal inquiries being completed, exhausted and brought to a good and just conclusion, we signify and declare to you, in order that what is just may be done, that you are Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, Peer of England, and may God preserve your Lordship."

And he bowed.

The sergeant-at-law, the doctor, the justice of the quorum, the Wapentake, the scrivener, all the attendants, except the executioner, repeated this salutation still more profoundly,

and bowed to the very ground before Gwynplaine.

"Ah! come now!" exclaimed Gwynplaine. "Let some one wake me up!"

And he stood up, quite pale.

"I come to wake you, indeed," said a voice, which had not yet been heard.

A man stepped out from behind one of the pillars. As nobody had come into the cellar since the iron plate had given admission to the police escort, it was clear that this man had been there in the dark before Gwynplaine's entrance, and that he had a regular part to perform as an observer, and the mission and function to be present. This man was stout and thickset, wore a court wig and a traveling cloak, was old, rather than young, and very precise.

He bowed to Gwynplaine with respect and ease, with the elegance of a gentleman servant, and without a magistrate's awkwardness.

"Yes," he said, "I come to wake you. For the past twenty-five years, you have been asleep. You are in a dream, and you must come out of it. You think yourself Gwynplaine, you are Clancharlie. You think you belong to the people, you belong to the nobility. You think yourself to be of the lowest rank, you are of the highest. You think yourself a player, you are a senator.

You believe yourself to be poor, you are opulent. You believe yourself to be lowly, you are great. Wake up, my Lord!"

Gwynplaine, in a very low voice, in which there was a certain amount of terror, murmured:

"What does all this mean?"

"It means, my Lord," replied the fat man, "that my name is Barkilphedro, that I am an officer of the Admiralty, that this sea-drift, Hardquanonne's gourd, was found on the seashore, that it was brought to me to be unsealed, according to the duties and prerogative of my office, that I opened it in presence of two sworn jurors of the Jetsam office, both of whom are members of Parliament, William Blathwaith, for the city of Bath and Thomas Jervoise for Southampton, that the two jurors have described and certified the contents of the gourd, and signed the official report of the opening, jointly with me, that I have made my report to Her Majesty, that, by order of the Queen, all the necessary legal formalities were carried out with the discretion that so delicate a matter demands, and that the last one, confrontation, has just taken place; it means that you have an income of a million a year; it means that you are a lord of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, a legislator and a judge, a supreme

judge, a sovereign legislator, clothed in crimson and ermine, equal to princes, like unto emperors, that you have the coronet of a peer on your head, and that you are going to marry a duchess, the daughter of a king."

Under this transfiguration crushing down upon him like a thunderbolt, Gwynplaine swooned.

II.

THAT WHICH WANDERS, DOES NOT GO ASTRAY

All this adventure had come from a soldier's finding a bottle on the sea-shore.

Let us relate the facts.

Every fact is a series of cog-wheels.

One day, one of the four gunners composing the garrison of Calshor Castle, had picked up a wicker gourd on the sand, at low-tide, that had been cast there by the high-tide. This gourd, was all mouldy and corked with a tarred cork. The soldier had carried this waif to the colonel of the castle, and the colonel had sent it to the Admiral of England. The Admiral, signifies, the Admiralty; for all *jetsam*, the Admiralty was Barkilphedro. Barkilphedro had opened and uncorked the gourd, and had carried it to the Queen. The Queen had immediately taken the matter into consideration. Two important counsellors had been summoned and consulted: the Lord-Chancellor, who is by law, "the

guardian of the King of England's conscience" and the lord-marshal who is "judge of Heraldry and of the pedigrees of the nobility." Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, a Catholic peer, who was the hereditary Grand Marshal of England, had sent word by his Deputy-Earl-Marshal, Henry Howard, Earl of Bindon, that he would be of the opinion of the Lord-Chancellor. As for the Lord-Chancellor, he was William Cowper. This chancellor must not be confounded with his namesake and contemporary William Cowper, the anatomist, the commentator of Bidloo, who published his "Treatise on Muscles," almost at the same time that Etienne Abeille published his "History of Bones," in France; a surgeon is a very different thing from a lord. Lord William Cowper is celebrated for having, in reference to the affair of Talbot Yelverton, Viscount Longueville, uttered this maxim: "As regards the constitution of England the restoration of a peer is more important than the restoration of a king." The gourd found at Calshor had aroused his attention in the highest degree. The author of a maxim loves opportunities for applying it. This was a case of the restoration of a peer. Search was made. Gwynplaine having a sign out, was easy to find. Hardquanonne too. He was

not dead. Prisons rot men, but preserve them, if keeping is preserving. People shut up in fortress prisons, were rarely disturbed. They changed dungeons hardly more than they changed coffins. Hardquanonne was still in Chatham dungeon. They had only to lay hands on him. He was transferred from Chatham to London. At the same time inquiries were made in Switzerland. The facts were ascertained to be correct. In the local registers at Vevey and at Lausanne they obtained the certificate of Lord Linnæus' marriage in exile, the certificate of the child's birth, the certificates of the death of both father and mother, and they took "for such use as might be necessary," a set of duly certified duplicates. All this was done in the strictest secrecy, with what was then called *royal promptitude*, and with that "mole-like silence" recommended and practised by Bacon, and later on, established as a law by Blackstone, for business pertaining to the chancellor's office and the State, and for matters termed senatorial.

The *jussu regis* and *Jeffreys'* signature were verified. To those who have pathologically studied the cases of caprice styled "our good pleasure" this *jussu regis* is quite simple. Why did James II., who, as it would seem, ought to have hidden such acts, leave written

traces of them, even at the risk of compromising their success? Because of his cynicism. His haughty indifference. Ah! you think that prostitutes only are shameless! Statecraft is equally so. *Et se cupit ante videri.* To commit a crime and then emblazon it,—is the very essence of history. The king tattooes himself like the convict. It would be to their interest to escape the police and history, but they would be very sorry if they did; they insist on being known and recognized. "See my arm, notice this design, a temple of Love, a flaming heart pierced by an arrow, I am Lacenaire!" *Jussu regis.* "It is I, James II." It is doing a bad action and then putting one's mark on it. To complete a thing by effrontery, to denounce himself, to make his misdeed permanent, is the insolent bravado of the criminal. Christina seizes Monaldeschi, makes him confess and has him assassinated, and then says: "I am the Queen of Sweden under the roof of the King of France." There is the tyrant who hides, like Tiberius, and the tyrant, who boasts, like Philip II. One is more of a scorpion, the other, more of a leopard. James II. belonged to the latter variety. He had, as we know, a gay and open countenance, herein, differing from Philip II. Philip was morose, James was

jovial. One can be ferocious for all that. James II. was a good-natured tiger. Like Philip II. his crimes left him calm. He was a monster by the grace of God. Hence he had nothing to dissimulate nor to extenuate, and his assassinations were done by divine right. He, too, would willingly have left his archives of Simancas behind him, with all his criminal undertakings numbered, dated, classified, labelled and put in order, each in its own compartment, like poisons in a druggist's prescription room. To sign one's crimes, is quite royal.

Every deed done is a draft drawn on the great unknown payer. This one had just matured with the ominous endorsement, *Jussu regis.*

Queen Anne, who, in one respect was not a woman, inasmuch as she excelled in keeping a secret, had demanded a confidential report on this serious affair from the Lord-Chancellor, one of the kind termed "Report to the royal ear." Reports of this kind have always been common in monarchies. At Vienna, there was the *counsellor of the ear*, an aulic official. It was an ancient Carlovingian dignity, the *auricularius*, of the old palatine charts. He who whispers to the emperor.

William, Baron Cowper, Chancellor of England, in whom the Queen believed,

because he was near-sighted like herself, and even more so, had drawn up a memoir beginning thus: "Two birds were at Solomon's orders, a hoopoe, the hudbud, which spoke all languages, and an eagle, the simourganka, which covered a caravan of twenty thousand men with the shadow of its wings. In the same way, under another form, Providence," etc. The Lord-Chancellor established the fact that an heir to a peerage had been carried off and mutilated, and then found. He did not blame James II., who, after all, was the Queen's father. He even gave reasons for the act. Firstly, there are old monarchical maxims. *E senioratu eripimus. In roturagio cadat.* Secondly, there is a royal right of mutilation. Chamberlayne asserts it. "The life and limbs of subjects depend on the king." (Chamberlayne, II. Part. Chapter IV. page 76.) *Corpora et bona nostrorum subjectorum nostra sunt,* said James I., of glorious and learned memory. The eyes of dukes of the royal blood have been put out, for the good of the kingdom. Certain princes, too near the throne, have been profitably smothered between two mattresses, and the case passed for apoplexy. Now, smothering is more than mutilating. The King of Tunis tore out his father's, Muley-Assem's, eyes, and his ambassadors were none the less

received by the Emperor. Hence the king may command the suppression of a limb, as a state suppression, etc., it is legal, etc. But one legality does not destroy another: "If the drowned man comes to the surface and is not dead, it is God who revises the king's deed. If the heir is found, let the crown be given back to him. Thus was it done for Lord Alla, King of Northumberland, who, also, had been a mountebank. Thus it should be done for Gwynplaine, who is a king also, that is, a lord. The baseness of the trade, performed and undergone by force of circumstances beyond control, does not tarnish the scutcheon; witness Abdolonyme, who was a king, although he had been a gardener; witness Joseph, who was a saint, although he had been a carpenter; witness Apollo, who was a god, although he had been a shepherd." In short, the learned chancellor, concluded that Fermain, Lord Clancharlie, wrongly called Gwynplaine, should be reinstated, in all his possessions and dignities, "on the sole condition, that he should be confronted with the malefactor Hardquanonne, and recognized by the same." And, upon this, the chancellor, as the constitutional guardian of the royal conscience, quieted that conscience.

The Lord-Chancellor, reminded in a postscript, that in case Hardquanonne refused

to answer, he was to be subjected to the *peine forte et dure*, in which case, to reach the period called *frodmortell* as demanded by King Athelstan's statute, the confrontation should take place the fourth day; which has indeed, the slight drawback, that if the sufferer dies on the second or the third day, the confrontation becomes difficult; but the law must be carried out. The inconvenience of the law, forms a part of the law.

Besides, the recognition of Gwynplaine by Hardquanonne did not present the slightest doubt, to the Lord-Chancellor's mind.

Anne, sufficiently well aware of Gwynplaine's disfiguration, yet not wishing to wrong her sister, to whom the possessions of the Clancharlies had devolved, joyously decided that Duchess Josiana should be married to the new lord, that is to say, to Gwynplaine.

The reinstatement of Lord Fermain Clancharlie was, moreover, a very simple case, the heir being legitimate and direct. For doubtful filiations or peerages "in abeyance," claimed by collaterals, the House of Lords must be consulted. Thus, to go no further back, the House was consulted in 1782 for the barony of Sidney, claimed by Elizabeth Perry; in 1798, for the barony of Beaumont, claimed by Thomas Stapleton; in 1803, for

the barony of Chandos, claimed by the Reverend Tymewell Brydges; in 1813 for the earldom of Banbury, claimed by Lieutenant-General Knollys, etc.; but here there was nothing of the sort. There was no litigation, but an evident legitimacy; a clear and certain right; there was no cause for carrying the matter before the House, and the Queen, assisted by the Lord-Chancellor, sufficed to recognize and admit the new lord.

Barkilphedro managed everything.

Thanks to him, the matter remained so completely in the dark, the secret was so hermetically kept, that neither Josiana nor Lord David, had wind of the prodigious fact which was undermining them. Josiana, extremely haughty at all times, lived on such heights, that it was easy to blockade her. She isolated herself by her own act. As for Lord David, he was sent to sea, on the coast of Flanders. He was about to lose his peerage and he had no suspicion of it. There is one little circumstance to be noticed here. It happened, that ten leagues away from the anchorage of the naval station commanded by Lord David, a captain named Halyburton, broke through the French fleet. The Earl of Pembroke, president of the council, placed this Captain Halyburton's name on a promotion list, as rear-admiral. Anne struck out

Halyburton's name and put Lord David Dirry-Moir in his place, so that Lord David should, when he learned that he was no longer a peer, have, at least, the consolation of being a rear-admiral.

Anne felt pleased. A horrible husband for her sister, and a high naval rank for Lord David. Spite and goodness.

Her Majesty was going to have a comedy performed for her pleasure. Besides, she said to herself, that she was making up for an abuse of power on the part of her august father, that she was restoring a member to the peerage, that she was acting like a great queen, that she was protecting innocence according to the will of God, that Providence in its holy and inscrutable ways, etc. It is very sweet to perform a just act, which is disagreeable to some one we do not like.

Furthermore, merely to know that her sister's future husband was deformed, had been enough for the Queen. How was Gwynplaine deformed? What kind of ugliness was it? Barkilphedro had not cared to inform the Queen of this, and Anne had not condescended to inquire. This was profound royal disdain. What did it matter, after all? The House of Lords could only be grateful. The Lord-Chancellor, the oracle, had spoken. To restore a peer, is to restore all the peerage.

Royalty, on this occasion, showed itself the good and respectful guardian of the privileges of the peerage. Whatever the face of the new lord might be, a face cannot be an objection to a right. Anne said all this more or less to herself, and went quietly forward to her aim, to that great feminine and royal aim, pleasing herself.

The Queen was then at Windsor, a circumstance which put a certain distance between court intrigues and the public.

Only the persons absolutely necessary, were in the secret of what was about to take place.

As for Barkilphedro, he was joyous; this added a gloomier expression to his face.

There is nothing in this world which can be more hideous, than joy.

He had the delight to be the first one to taste the contents of Hardquanonne's gourd. He seemed but little surprised, astonishment being a quality of small minds. Besides, was not all this due to him, to him who had stood on guard so long, at the gate of Chance? Something surely had to come, since he waited for it.

This *nil mirari* was a part of his habitual expression. At heart, we must say, he had been astonished. Any one who could have taken off the mask which he put on his conscience even before God, would have found

this. Precisely at that moment, Barkilphedro began to be convinced, that it would be decidedly impossible for him, the intimate and inferior enemy, to make any fracture in the lofty life of Duchess Josiana. Hence he had a frantic attack of latent animosity. He had reached that paroxysm called discouragement. He was all the more furious because he despaired. "To champ one's bit," what a true and tragic expression! A wretch gnawing at his impotence. Barkilphedro was perhaps just at the point of renouncing, not his desire to harm Josiana, but his attempts at doing so; not his rage, but his biting. Yet, what a fall, to loosen his hold! To keep his hatred in its sheath like a museum dagger! What bitter humiliation.

Suddenly, at the exact moment, for immense universal Chance takes pleasure in such coincidences, — Hardquanonne's gourd comes, from wave to wave, and falls into his hands. In the unknown, there is some strangely tamed element which seems to be placed at the commands of evil. Barkilphedro, assisted by two chance witnesses, indifferent jurors of the Admiralty, uncorks the gourd, finds the parchment, unfolds it, reads. . . . Fancy his monstrous delight!

It is strange to think that the sea, the wind, space, ebbs and tides, storms, calms, and

gales, should give themselves so much trouble, in order to make a villain happy. This complicity had lasted fifteen years. A most mysterious labor. During these fifteen years there had not been a minute when the Ocean had not been working at it. The waves had transmitted the floating bottle from one to another; the reefs had eluded a shock against the glass; no crack had injured the gourd; no friction had worn out the cork; sea-weed had not rotted the wicker; shells had not gnawed away the word Hardquanonne; the water had not penetrated into the waif; mould had not dissolved the parchment; moisture had not erased the writing; what trouble the abyss must have taken! And in this way, that which Gernardus had cast into darkness, darkness had given to Barkilphedro, and the message sent to God, had reached the devil. There had been a breach of trust in immensity, and the obscure irony which mingles with events, had managed in such a way, that it had complicated this loyal triumph — that of making the lost child Gwynplaine, become Lord Clancharlie—with a venomous victory; it had done a good action in a wicked way, and put justice at the service of iniquity. To take away James the Second's victim, was to give a prey to Barkilphedro. To raise Gwynplaine was to deliver up Josiana.

Barkilphedro was succeeding; and it was for this, that during so many years, the waves, the surges, the blasts, had tossed, shaken, pushed, thrown, tormented and respected that glass bubble, wherein so many lives were mingled! It was for this, that there had been a cordial alliance between the winds, the tides and the storms! The vast agitation of the miraculous had been obliging for a wretch! Infinity had been the collaborator of an earthworm! Destiny has such unfathomable whims.

Barkilphedro had a flash of Titanic pride. He said to himself, that all this had been carried out for him. He felt himself the centre and the object of it.

He was mistaken. Let us do justice to Chance. This was not the true meaning of the remarkable circumstance of which Barkilphedro's hatred was taking advantage. The Ocean making itself the father and the mother of an orphan, sending the storm to his executioners, shattering the bark which repulsed the child, swallowing up the clasped hands of the shipwrecked men, refusing all their supplications and accepting nothing from them but their repentance, the tempest receiving a deposit from the hands of death, the stout ship containing the crime, replaced by the fragile vial holding the reparation, the sea changing its character, like a panther who had

become a nurse, and setting itself to rock, not the child's cradle, but its destiny, while he grows up ignorant of all the abyss is doing for him, the waves, to which the gourd has been thrown, watching over that past, in which there is a future, the hurricane blowing on it kindly, the currents directing the frail waif across the unfathomable ways of the watery waste, the precautions of sea-weeds, swells, rocks, all the vast froth of the abyss taking an innocent creature under its protection, the wave as imperturbable as a conscience, chaos re-establishing order, the world of darkness ending in light, all darkness employed to bring out this star—truth; the exile consoled in his grave, the heir restored to his inheritance, the king's crime annulled, the divine premeditation obeyed, the little, the weak, the abandoned child having the Infinite for its guardian; that is what Barkilphedro could have seen in the event by which he triumphed; and that was what he did not see. He did not say to himself that all had been done for Gwynplaine; he said to himself that all had been done for Barkilphedro; and that it was worth while. Such is the nature of Satans.

Besides, one must be but very little acquainted with the tender care of the Ocean, to be surprised that a fragile waif could have

floated for fifteen years without being damaged. Fifteen years, that is nothing. On the fourth of October, 1867, in Morbihan, between the island of Groix, the point of the peninsula of Gavres and the rock Des Errants, some fishermen of Port-Louis found a Roman amphora of the fourth century, all covered with arabesques by the incrustations of the sea. This amphora had floated fifteen centuries.

Whatever phlegmatic appearance Barkilphedro may have wished to preserve, his stupefaction had equalled his joy.

Everything presented itself; everything seemed as if prepared. The fragments of the incident were scattered around beforehand within his reach. He had nothing to do but to draw them together and join them. An adjustment which it would be very amusing to make. Perfect chiseling!

Gwynplaine! He knew that name. *Masca ridens!* The Laughing Mask! Like every one else, he had been to see the Laughing Man. He had read the placard-sign hung up on Tadcaster Inn, just as one reads a play-bill that attracts the crowd; he had noticed it; he remembered it at once in its least details, and, at all events, he could verify them later on; this play-bill, in the electrical evocation which took place within him, re-appeared before his mind's eye, and placed

itself next to the shipwrecked men's parchment, like an answer next to a question; and these lines: "Here is to be seen Gwynplaine, abandoned when he was ten years old, on the night of the 29th of January, 1690, on the sea-shore, at Portland," suddenly assumed an apocalyptic splendor under his glance. He had a vision: he saw the flashing of *Mene Tekel Upharsin* upon a charlatan's speech at a fair. It was all over with all the scaffolding on which Josiana's existence was built. A sudden crumbling had taken place. The lost child had been found. There was a Lord Clancharlie. David Dirry-Moir was dispossessed. Peerage, wealth, power, rank, all that would come out of Lord David's hands and go to Gwynplaine. All; castles, parks, forests, mansions, palaces, domains, Josiana included, belonged to Gwynplaine. And Josiana, what a winding up for her! Whom had she before her now? Illustrious and haughty, a player; beautiful and imperious, a monster. Could one ever have hoped for that? Truth was, Barkilphedro was in a state of enthusiasm. All the most hateful combinations, may be surpassed by the infernal munificence of the unexpected. When reality sets about it, it can make masterpieces. Barkilphedro found all his dreams stupid. He had something better.

If the change which was going to be made by him, had been made against him, he would not have desired it any the less. There are certain ferocious disinterested insects that sting, knowing that they will die of the sting themselves. Barkilphedro was that kind of vermin.

But this time, he had not the merit of disinterestedness. Lord David Dirry-Moir owed him nothing, and Lord Fermain Clancharlie was about to owe him everything. From being patronized, Barkilphedro was going to become a protector. And the protector of whom? Of a peer of England. Was he really going to have a lord of his own? A lord who would be his creature! Barkilphedro relied on giving him his first bias. And this lord would be the Queen's morganatic brother-in-law! Being so very ugly, he would please the Queen in the same proportion as he would displease Josiana. Advancing by this favor, and by wearing a grave and modest garb, Barkilphedro might become an important person. He had always intended himself for the Church. He had a vague longing to be a bishop.

In the meantime, he was happy.

What a great success! And how well all this quantity of work had been done by

Chance! His vengeance, for he called it his vengeance, had been gently brought to him by the waves. He had not vainly lain in ambush.

He was the reef. Josiana was the drift-wood. Josiana came dashing on Barkilphedro! Intensest ecstasy of villainy.

He was skilful in that art which is called suggestion, and which consists in making a little incision in the mind of others, into which you put an idea of your own; while keeping aloof, and not appearing to meddle in the matter, he managed in such a way as to make Josiana go to the Green-Box booth and see Gwynplaine. That could do no harm. The mountebank seen in his low estate, would be a good ingredient in the combination. Later on, it would season it.

He had silently prepared all beforehand. What he wanted was something strangely sudden. The work he had executed, could only be expressed by these strange words: He wanted to construct a thunderbolt.

When the preliminaries were completed, he had watched to have all the requisite formalities carried out according to legal forms. The secret had not suffered by it, silence being a part of law.

The confrontation of Hardquanonne and Gwynplaine had taken place; Barkilphedro

had been present. We have just seen the result.

The same day, one of the Queen's post-chaises was suddenly sent by Her Majesty to London to fetch Lady Josiana and take her to Windsor, where Anne was then passing the season. Josiana, on account of something she had in her mind, would have liked to disobey, or, at least, delay her obedience for a day, and put off this departure until the morrow, but court life does not permit such opposition. She was obliged to set out at once, and leave Hunkerville House, her London residence, for Corleone Lodge, her Windsor residence.

Duchess Josiana had left London at the very moment when the Wapentake appeared at Tadcaster Inn, to carry off Gwynplaine and lead him to the torture-chamber at Southwark.

When she reached Windsor, the Usher of the Black Rod, who guards the door of the presence-chamber, informed her that Her Majesty was closeted with the Lord-Chancellor, and could not receive her until the next day; that, consequently, she was to remain at Corleone Lodge, at Her Majesty's disposition, and that Her Majesty would send her orders direct, the next morning, on awakening. Josiana went home, very much vexed, supped

in a bad humor, had a headache, dismissed everybody except her page, then dismissed him too, and went to bed while it was still daylight.

On arriving, she had learned that Lord David Dirry-Moir, having received an order while at sea, from Her Majesty, directing him to come immediately and receive instructions from the Queen, was expected at Windsor the following day.

III.

"NO MAN COULD PASS SUDDENLY FROM SIBERIA TO SENEGAL WITHOUT LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS."
—HUMBOLDT

If even the firmest and most energetic man were to faint under a sudden blow of Fortune's mace, it ought not to surprise us. A man is knocked down by the unforeseen, as an ox by a butcher's axe. Francis of Albescola, the one who tore up the iron chains from Turkish ports, remained unconscious a whole day, when he was chosen Pope. Now, the stride from a cardinal to a pope, is less than that from a mountebank to a peer of England.

Nothing is so violent as a loss of equilibrium.

When Gwynplaine came to himself and opened his eyes, it was night. Gwynplaine was in an arm-chair, in the middle of a vast chamber all hung with crimson velvet; walls, ceiling and floor. One walked on velvet. Near him there stood, bare-headed, the fat man with the traveling cloak, who had stepped

from behind a pillar in the vault at Southwark. Gwynplaine was alone in that room with that man. From his chair, by stretching out his arms, he could touch two tables, each one bearing a branched candle-stick with six lighted wax candles. On one of the tables, there were papers and a casket; on the other, some light refreshments, cold chicken, wine and brandy, served upon a silver-gilt tray.

Through the panes of a long window, reaching from the floor to the ceiling, a clear April evening sky allowed him to see a semicircle of columns around a court-yard closed by a three-gated doorway, one very wide and two low ones; the very large carriage-gate was in the middle; the equestrian gate, on the right, was narrower, the smallest, the pedestrian gate, was on the left. These gates were closed by iron railings with glittering points; a high piece of sculpture crowned the central gate. The columns, as well as the pavement of the court, were probably of white marble, which looked like snow, and framed a mosaic, that was only vaguely distinct in the shadow, in its sheet of flat stones; this mosaic, when seen by day, no doubt presented to the sight, with all its enamel and all its colors, a gigantic coat-of-arms, after the Florentine fashion. Zigzags of balustrades went up and down, indicating terrace staircases. Above the

court there arose an immense pile of architecture, which now appeared misty and vague on account of the darkness. Intervals of sky, filled with stars, outlined the silhouette of a palace.

One could see an enormous roof, gables with volutes, mansards with visors like helmets, chimneys like towers, and entablatures covered with motionless gods and goddesses. Beyond the colonnade, in the half-shadow, there plashed one of those fairy-land fountains, which are softly noisy, and fall from basin to basin, mingling rain with the cascade, seem like the scattering of a jewel-box, while they madly distribute their diamonds and pearls to the breeze, as if to entertain the statues which surround them. Long rows of windows stretched away, separated by panoplies in high-relief, and by busts on brackets. On the acroteria, trophies and helmets with stone plumes, alternated with the gods.

In the room where Gwynplaine sat, at the end opposite the window, there was a fireplace as high as the wall, on one side, and on the other, under a dais, one of those spacious feudal beds, which one mounts by a ladder, and in which one can lie cross-wise. The bed stepping-stool was next to it. A row of arm-chairs along the walls, and a row of chairs in front of the arm-chairs completed

the furniture. The ceiling was domed; a great wood fire in the French fashion, blazed in the fire-place; by the richness of the flames, streaked with pinks and greens, a connoisseur would have known that this fire was made of ash wood,—a great luxury; the room was so large that the candelabra left it dark. Here and there, lowered and swaying tapestries, indicated communications with other rooms. The whole room had the square and massive look of James I.'s time, an antiquated and superb style. Just as the carpet and the hangings of the chamber, the dais, the canopy, the bed, the stepping-stool, the curtains, the mantel-piece, the table covers, the arm-chairs, the chairs, were all of crimson velvet. No gilding, except on the ceiling. There, at an equal distance from the four angles, there shone, in low relief, an enormous round shield of hammered metal, whereon a dazzling relief of armorial bearings glittered; in these coats of arms, on two adjoining shields, could be seen a baron's circlet and a marquis' crown; was it made of gilded brass? Was it silver gilt? No one knew. It seemed to be gold. And in the centre of this lordly ceiling, like a magnificent dark sky, this gleaming escutcheon, had the gloomy splendor of a sun in darkness.

A shy man, in whom there is a mixture of a free man, is almost as uneasy in a palace as in a prison. This superb place was disquieting. All magnificence produces fright. Who could be the inhabitant of this august dwelling? To what Colossus did all this grandeur belong? What lion's den was this palace? Gwynplaine not yet fully awakened, felt his heart contract.

"Where am I?" said he.

The man who was standing before him, answered:

"You are in your own house, my Lord."

IV.

FASCINATION

It takes time to come up to the surface again.

Gwynplaine had been plunged to the very depths of stupefaction.

You cannot get a foothold in the unknown all at once.

Ideas are routed just as armies are; and they cannot be immediately rallied.

You feel yourself scattered, as it were. You seem to witness an odd dispersal of yourself.

God is the arm, chance is the sling, man is the pebble. Just try to resist, when once you are started!

Gwynplaine, if the expression is permitted us, ricocheted from one surprise to another. After the Duchess' love-letter, followed the revelation of Southwark dungeon.

When the unexpected begins in a destiny, be ready for this: blow will follow blow. That grim portal once opened, surprises rush in. The breach once made in your wall, the

pell-mell of events comes pouring in. Extraordinary occurrences do not come once only.

All that is extraordinary, is obscure. This obscurity was resting on Gwynplaine. What was happening to him seemed unintelligible to him. He saw everything through that mist which a deep commotion leaves in one's brain, like the dust of a falling ruin. The shock had been from top to bottom. Nothing presented itself clearly to him. However, light is always restored by degrees. The dust settles. From minute to minute the density of astonishment grows less. Gwynplaine was like some one who might have his eyes open in a dream, and was trying to make out what there was in it. He decomposed, and then re-constructed this cloud. He had intermittent wanderings. He was experiencing that oscillation of the mind in the unforeseen, which, by turns, drives you to the side where you understand, then leads you back to the side where you no longer understand. Who has ever escaped having this pendulum in his brain?

By degrees, dilatation took place in his thoughts, in the darkness of the incident, just as it had done in his pupils, in the subterranean gloom of Southwark. The difficulty was to succeed in putting a certain interval between so many accumulated sensations.

In order to get the combustion of confused ideas, called comprehension, to operate, there must be air between the emotions. Here air was wanting. The event, so to speak, was not respirable. On entering the terrifying vault at Southwark, Gwynplaine had expected the convict's manacles; and they had put a peer's coronet on his head. How was it possible? There was not enough room between what Gwynplaine had dreaded, and what had happened, it had all followed too rapidly; his affright had changed into something else too abruptly for it to be clear. The two contrasts were too closely pressed upon each other. Gwynplaine was making efforts to draw his mind out of that vice.

He was silent. This is the instinct of all great stupefactions, which are more on the defensive than one believes them to be. He who says nothing, is really facing everything. A word you may drop, seized by the unknown mechanism, can drag you completely under its complex wheels.

The fear of the lowly, is to be crushed. The crowd always fears being trampled under foot. Now, Gwynplaine had belonged to the crowd a long time.

A singular condition of human uneasiness is expressed by this phrase: Watching for what is to happen. Gwynplaine was in that

condition. You do not feel that you are well balanced on the newly arisen conditions. You are watching something that is to have a result. You are vaguely attentive. You are watching for what is to happen. What? You do not know. Who? You are trying to see.

The big-bellied man repeated: "You are in your own house, my Lord."

Gwynplaine felt himself. When greatly surprised we look, so as to be sure that things really exist; then we touch ourselves, so as to assure ourselves that we are alive. He was, indeed the one spoken to; but, he was now some one else. He no longer had either his hooded jacket or his leather collar on. He was dressed in a waistcoat of silver cloth, and in a satin coat, which he knew was embroidered, by the touch; he felt a filled purse in his waistcoat pocket. Wide velvet breeches covered his close fitting clown's small-clothes; his shoes had high red heels. Just as well as they had carried him into this palace, they had changed his clothes.

The man resumed: "Will your Lordship deign to remember this: I am the one called Barkilphedro. I am a clerk of the Admiralty. It was I who opened Hardquanonne's gourd, and drew your destiny out of it. Thus, in the 'Arabian Nights,' a fisherman lets a giant out of a bottle."

Gwynplaine fixed his eyes on the smiling face which was speaking to him.

Barkilphedro continued:

"Besides this palace, my Lord, you have Hunkerville House, which is larger. You have Clancharlie Castle, from which you take your title, and which is a fortress of Edward the Elder's time. You have nineteen bailiwicks of your own, with their villages and their peasants. This puts about eighty thousand vassals and tenants under your banner of lord and nobleman. At Clancharlie you are the judge, judge of everything, both goods and persons, and you hold your baronial court. The only right the king has beyond yours, is that of coining money. The king, by the Norman law, entitled chief-signor, has justice, court and coin. Coin means money. With that exception, you are a king in your lordship, as he is in his kingdom. You have a right, as baron, to a gibbet with four pillars in England, and as a marquis to a gallows with seven posts in Sicily; a simple lord having but two pillars, a lord of the manor three, and a duke eight. You are entitled prince in the ancient charters of Northumbria. You are allied to the Viscounts Valentia in Ireland, whose name is Powers, and to the Earls of Umfraville in Scotland, whose name is Angus. You are

chief of a clan like Campbell, Ardmannach and MacCallummore. You have eight castle-wards, Reculver, Buxton, Hell-Kerters, Homble, Moricambe, Gumdraith, Trenwardraith and others. You have rights on the peat-bog of Pillinmore and on the alabaster quarries of Trent; you have, besides, all the country side of Pennethchase, and you have a mountain, with the ancient city which is upon it. The city is called Vinecaunton; the mountain is called Moil-enlli. All this gives you a revenue of forty thousand pounds sterling, that is, forty times the twenty-five thousand francs income with which a Frenchman is satisfied."

While Barkilphedro was speaking, Gwynplaine, in a *crescendo* of stupor, remembered. Memory is an abyss that a single word can stir to its lowest depths. Gwynplaine knew every name that Barkilphedro pronounced. They were inscribed on the last lines of the two placards which covered the walls of the hut where his childhood had been spent, and by dint of allowing his eyes to wander over them mechanically, he knew them by heart. When, as an abandoned orphan, he reached the rolling hut at Weymouth, he had found his inventoried inheritance awaiting him there, and in the mornings, when the poor little fellow woke up, the first thing his

careless and inattentive glance spelled out, was his own lordship and peerage. It was a strange detail which added itself to all his other surprises, that for fifteen years, prowling from square to square, the clown of a wandering booth, earning his bread from day to day, picking up farthings and living on crumbs, he had, nevertheless, traveled with his fortune set forth over his misery.

Barkilphedro touched the casket on the table with his forefinger:

"My Lord, this casket contains two thousand guineas which Her Gracious Majesty sends you for your immediate needs."

Gwynplaine made a gesture.

"They will be for my father Ursus," he said.

"Very well, my Lord," said Barkilphedro. "Ursus, at Tadcaster Inn. The sergeant of the coif, who accompanied us here, and who will soon go back, will take them to him. Perhaps I may go to London. In that case, I would take them. I will see to it."

"I will take them to him, myself," replied Gwynplaine.

Barkilphedro ceased smiling and said: "Impossible."

There is an inflection of voice which italicizes. Barkilphedro used that accent. He stopped as if to put a period after the

word he had just said. Then he went on with the peculiar and respectful tone of a valet who feels that he is the master.

"My Lord, you are twenty-three miles from London, here, at Corleone Lodge, in your court residence, close to the Royal Castle of Windsor. You are here without any one's knowledge. You were brought here in a closed carriage, which awaited you at the door of Southwark jail. The persons who introduced you into this palace, do not know who you are, but they know me, and that sufficed. By means of a secret key, which I hold, it was possible to bring you to this room. There are persons asleep in the house, but this is not the hour for awakening people. That is why we have time for an explanation, which, however, will be short. I am going to make it. I have Her Majesty's commission."

Barkilphedro, while speaking, began to turn over the leaves of a bundle of papers, near the casket.

"My Lord, here is your patent of peerage. Here is the patent of your Sicilian marquisate. Here are the parchments and title-deeds of your eight baronies with the seals of eleven kings, from Baldret, King of Kent, down to James VI. and I., King of England and Scotland. Here are your letters of precedence. Here are your rent-rolls, and the titles and

description of your fiefs, freeholds, dependencies, lands and domains. What you see above your head, in that coat-of-arms on the ceiling, are your two crowns, the baron's circlet with its pearls, and the marquis' coronet with its leaves. Here, at hand, in your dressing-room, hangs your crimson velvet peer's robe, bordered with ermine. This very day, a few hours ago, the Lord-Chancellor and the deputy Earl-Marshal of England, informed of the result of your confrontation with the Comprachicos Hardquanonne, received Her Majesty's orders. Her Majesty signed according to her good pleasure, which is the same thing as the law. All formalities have been complied with. To-morrow, not later than to-morrow, you will be admitted to the House of Lords, where for several days they have been deliberating on a bill, presented by the crown, the object of which is, to augment the annual allowance of the Duke of Cumberland, the Queen's husband, by one hundred thousand pounds sterling, or two million five hundred thousand French livres; you can take part in the discussion."

Barkilphedro interrupted his discourse, breathed slowly, and resumed.

"Nothing however is done yet. No one needs to be a peer of England against his will. All can be annulled and disappear,

unless you fully understand. It sometimes happens in state policy that an event comes to naught before it ripens. My Lord, up to the present moment silence still rests upon you. The House of Lords will not be informed of the facts until to-morrow. This whole affair has been kept a secret for state reasons, which are of so much consequence, that the grave persons, who up to this moment, are the only ones cognizant of your existence and your rights, will immediately forget them, if state reasons should command them to forget them. That which is in darkness may remain in darkness. It is easy to efface you. It is all the easier because you have a brother, the natural son of your father and of a woman, who, afterwards, during the exile of your father, was the mistress of Charles II., which is the reason why your brother has a good position at court; now it is to this brother, bastard though he be, that your peerage would revert. Do you wish that? I do not suppose so. Well, then, all depends upon you. You must obey the Queen. You will not leave this residence before to-morrow, in one of Her Majesty's carriages, and in order to go to the House of Lords. My Lord, do you wish to be a peer of England, yes or no? The Queen has plans for you. She destines you for a quasi-royal alliance. Lord Fermain

Clancharlie, this is the decisive moment. Destiny never opens one door without closing another. After certain steps forward, a backward step is no longer possible. Whoever enters into transfiguration, leaves a vanishing behind him. My Lord, Gwynplaine is dead. Do you understand?"

Gwynplaine trembled from head to foot, then was himself again.

"Yes," said he.

Barkilphedro smiled, bowed, took the casket under his cloak, and went out.

V.

WE THINK WE REMEMBER, WE FORGET

What are those strange dissolving views, which take place in the human soul?

Gwynplaine had been at one and the same time, carried off to a summit and precipitated into an abyss.

He was dizzy.

He had a double vertigo.

One caused by his ascent, the other by his fall.

A fatal combination.

He had felt himself rise, but had not felt himself fall.

It is dangerous to see a new horizon.

A perspective gives advice. Not always good advice.

He had before him that fairy vista, a snare perhaps, of a cloud parting and showing him the depths of heaven.

So deep that they were dark.

He was on the mountain whence all the kingdoms of the earth could be seen.

A mountain all the more terrible because it does not exist. Those who are on its summit are in a dream.

Temptation there, is a chasm, and is so powerful, that on that summit Hell hopes to corrupt Paradise, and the Devil brings God there.

To fascinate eternity! What a strange hope!

How can a man struggle where Satan tempted Jesus?

Palaces, castles, power, opulence, all human felicities as far as the eye can reach, a whole map of joys spread out on the horizon, a sort of radiant geography, of which we are the centre, make a perilous mirage.

And we must try to imagine the bewilderment of such a vision, when it is not led up to, and comes without any preliminary climbing, without warning, without transition.

Gwynplaine was in the condition in which a man would be, who had fallen asleep in a mole's burrow, and awakened on the top of the spire of Strasburg Cathedral.

Vertigo is a kind of formidable lucidity. Especially that kind which carries you towards both light and darkness at once, and is composed of wild rotations in two contrary directions.

You see too much, and not enough.

You see all and nothing.

You are what the author of this book has spoken of somewhere else, as the "dazzled blind man."

Gwynplaine left alone, began to walk up and down with great strides. A boiling up precedes an explosion.

Amid all this agitation, in the impossibility of keeping still, he was meditating. This boiling up was a liquidation. He evoked his memory. How surprising that we have so carefully listened to what we scarcely thought we heard! The declaration of the shipwrecked men, read by the Sheriff in the Southwark vault, came back to him clearly and intelligibly; he remembered every word of it; he saw all his childhood beneath it.

Suddenly he stopped, his hands behind his back, looking at the ceiling, the sky, no matter what, whatever was above him.

"Retaliation!" said he.

He was like one raising his head out of water. He seemed to see everything, the past, the future, the present, in the shock of a sudden brightness.

"Ah!" he exclaimed,—for there are exclamations in the depths of our thoughts—"ah! so it was that! I was a lord. All is laid bare. Ah! they have robbed, betrayed, ruined, disinherited, abandoned, assassinated

me! My destiny's corpse floated for fifteen years on the sea, when suddenly it touched land, and started up erect and living! I am regenerated! I am born! I always felt that something more than a mere wretch was palpitating under my rags, and when I turned towards men, I felt that they were the flock, and that I was not the dog, but the shepherd! Pastors of people, leaders of men, guides and masters, that is what my fathers were; and what they were, I am! I am a nobleman, and I have a sword; I am a baron, and I have a helmet; I am a marquis, and I have my plumes; I am a peer, and I have a crown. Ah! they took all that away from me! I was a dweller in light, and they made me a dweller in darkness! Those who proscribed the father, sold the child. When my father was dead, they drew the stone of exile, which he had as his pillow, from under his head, tied it around my neck, and flung me into the sewer! Oh! those villains, who tortured my childhood, yes, they stir and rise in the depths of my memory, yes, I see them again. I have been the piece of flesh pecked at upon a tomb, by a flock of ravens. I have bled and cried under all those horrible black profiles. Ah! and that is where they dashed me, where I would be crushed by all who come and go, under the trampling of everybody,

beneath the lowest depths of the human race, lower than the serf, lower than the lackey, lower than the villain, lower than the slave, in the spot where Chaos becomes a cloaca, in the depths where all disappears! And that is where I now come from! That is whence I am arising! That is whence I am resuscitating! And here I am. Retaliation!"

He sat down, rose again, clasped his hands on his head, began to walk once more, and this tempest's monologue went on within him: "Where am I? On the summit! Where have I just alighted? On the highest pinnacle! This apex, grandeur, this dome of the world, omnipotence, is my home. I am one of the gods of this temple in the air! I dwell on the inaccessible heights. Those heights that I looked at from below, and whence there streamed so many rays of light, that they made me close my eyes, that unassailable nobility, that impregnable fortress of the fortunate. I am now entering it. I am there. I am a part of it. Ah! what a complete turn of the wheel! I was below, I am above. Above, forever! Now I am a lord, I shall have a scarlet cloak, I shall have a coronet on my head, I shall be present at the coronation of kings, they will take their oath of office from my hands, I shall judge ministers and princes,

I shall exist. From the depths into which they flung me, I rebound to the very zenith. I have town and country palaces, mansions, gardens, game, preserves, forests, coaches, millions; I will give entertainments, I will make laws, I shall have the choice of all happiness and joys, and the vagabond Gwynplaine, who had not the right to gather a flower in the grass, can cull the very stars from heaven!''

Funereal entrance of darkness into a soul. Thus did material grandeur take the place of moral grandeur in this Gwynplaine, who had been a hero, and let us add, who, perhaps, had not ceased to be one. Sad transition. A troop of passing demons breaking in upon virtue. An unexpected attack made upon man's weak side. All those inferior things, called superior, such as ambitions, the unavowed desires of instinct, passions, lusts, which had been driven far from Gwynplaine by the wholesomeness of misfortune, now tumultuously took possession of that generous heart. And what had all that depended on? On the finding of a parchment in a waif drifted about by the sea. We sometimes see conscience violated by Chance.

Gwynplaine was drinking great draughts of pride, which darkened his soul. Such is the effect of this tragic wine.

This intoxication invaded him; he did more than consent, he relished it. It was the effect of a long thirst. Are we the accomplices of the cup wherein we lose our reason? He had always vaguely desired this. He had always looked towards the great; to look, is to wish. The eaglet is not born in the eyrie with impunity.

To be a lord. At certain moments, he found that quite natural, now.

Only a few hours had elapsed, and yet how far away the past of yesterday seemed to be!

Gwynplaine had fallen into the ambuscade of "Better," which is the enemy of "Good."

Woe to him of whom it is said: "How lucky he is!"

One can resist adversity better than prosperity. We get out of ill luck in more entire condition than out of good luck. Charybdis is misery, but wealth is Scylla. Those who remain erect under the thunderbolt are prostrated by the flash. Thou who wast not surprised at the precipice, fear to be carried away on the legions of cloud and dream wings. The ascent will elevate and lessen thee. Apotheosis has a sinister power for striking one down.

It is not easy to be able to recognize what happiness is. Chance is nothing but a disguise. Nothing deceives so much as that face. Is it Providence? Is it Fatality?

A brightness may not be a brightness at all. For light is truth, and a gleam may be treason. You think that it lights you; no, it sets you on fire.

It is night; a hand places a candle, vile tallow which becomes a star, at the edge of an opening in darkness. The moth goes to it.

In what degree is it responsible?

The sight of fire fascinates the moth just as the serpent's eye fascinates the bird.

Is it possible for the moth and the bird not to go there? Is it possible for the leaf to refuse to obey the wind? Is it possible for the stone to refuse obedience to gravitation?

These are material questions, which are moral questions as well.

After reading the Duchess' letter, Gwynplaine had recovered himself. There had been deep-rooted ties in him which had resisted. But the storm, after having exhausted the wind on one side of the horizon, began on the other, and destiny like nature, has its obstinacies. The first shock loosens, the second uproots.

Alas! How do oaks fall?

Thus, he, who, as a child ten years old, alone on Portland cliff, ready to give battle, looked firmly at the combatants whom he was about to encounter—the blast, which carried away the ship by which he expected to sail, the abyss, which swallowed up this plank of

safety, the yawning void, whose threat lies in falling back, the earth, which refused him shelter, the zenith, which refused him a star, solitude without pity, darkness without a look, the ocean, the sky, all violences in one immensity, and all enigmas in the other; he, who had not trembled or given way before the hostile enormity of the unknown; he, who, though quite little, had held his own against Night, as the ancient Hercules had held his own against Death; he, who in this memorable conflict, had thrown down the challenge, and put all chances against himself by adopting a child, though but a child himself, and by encumbering himself with a burden, he so fragile and weary, rendered the attacks on his weakness all the easier, and unmuzzled the monsters of darkness which were in ambush all around him; he, who a warrior before his time, had at once, from the very first steps out of his cradle, wrestled with destiny; he, who had not allowed his disproportion with the struggle to prevent him from struggling; he, who seeing a frightful occultation of the human race take place around him, had accepted that eclipse and proudly continued on his course; he, who had known how to be cold and thirsty and hungry, valiantly; he, who, though a pigmy in stature had been a colossus in soul; this Gwynplaine, who had

conquered the immense blast of the abyss, in its double form of Tempest and Misery, was now staggering under a mere breath,—Vanity.

Thus, when she has exhausted distresses, bereavements, storms, roars, agonies and catastrophes on a man who stands up against them, Fatality begins to smile, and man, suddenly intoxicated, stumbles.

The smile of Fatality. Can one imagine anything more terrible? It is the last resource of that pitiless assayer of souls, who puts men to proof. The tiger lurking in destiny, sometimes puts out a caressing velvety paw. Frightful preparation. Hideous gentleness of the monster.

Every man has been able to observe in himself the coincidence of a weakening and a growth. A sudden growth dislocates and causes fever.

Gwynplaine had in his brain the dizzy whirling of a crowd of new things, all the light and shade of metamorphosis, all sorts of strange confrontations, the shock of the past against the future, two Gwynplaines, a double self; the one behind, being a ragged child emerging from night, prowling, shivering, hungry, making people laugh, the one in front, a brilliant nobleman, splendid, proud, and dazzling London. He was stripping off the one and amalgamating himself with the

other. He was casting off the mountebank and entering into the lord. A change of skin is sometimes a change of soul. At times it seemed too much like a dream. It was complex; bad and good. He thought of his father. An unknown father, is a painful thing. He tried to imagine him. He thought of this brother of whom he had just heard. So he had a family! What! a family for him, Gwynplaine! He lost himself on these fantastic scaffoldings. He had visions of magnificence; unknown solemnities passed before him in clouds; he heard trumpet flourishes.

"And then," said he, "I shall be eloquent."

And he pictured a splendid entrance into the House of Lords to himself. He would come there bursting with new things. What would he not have to say? What an accumulation he had made! What an advantage to be in the midst of them, as the man who had seen, touched, experienced, suffered, and to be able to exclaim to them: "I have been near to all that from which you are so far!" He would throw reality into the face of these patricians so puffed up with illusions; and they would tremble, for he would be true; and they would applaud, for he would be great. He would rise up among these all-powerful men, more powerful than they. He would appear to them as the torch-bearer, for

he would show them truth, and like the sword-bearer, for he would show them justice. What a triumph!

And while he built these edifices in his mind, which was at once lucid and confused, he made delirious gestures, dropped down in the first arm-chair he reached, had attacks of drowsiness, and then sudden starts. He went and came, looked at the ceiling, examined the crowns, vaguely studied the hieroglyphics of the blazonry, felt the velvet on the wall, moved the chairs, turned over the parchment, read the names, spelt the titles, Buxton, Homble, Gumdraith, Hunkerville, Clancharlie, compared the wax and the seals, touched the silken braid of the royal seals, went towards the windows, listened to the plash of the fountain, noticed the statues, and counted the marble columns, with the patience of a somnambulist, and said, "All this is real."

And he touched his satin coat and asked himself,—

"Is this really I? Yes."

He was in the midst of an internal tempest.

Did he feel his faintness and fatigue in this great storm? Did he drink? Did he eat? Did he sleep? If he did, it was without knowing it. In certain violent situations our instincts satisfy themselves, as they please, without our thought taking any part in the

matter. Besides, his thought was less a thought than a mist. When the black flame of the eruption disgorges itself from its pit full of whirlwinds, is the crater conscious of the flocks which are grazing at the foot of its mountain?

Thus hours passed.

Dawn appeared and day came. A white ray penetrated into the room, and at the same time entered into the spirit of Gwynplaine.

"And Dea," said the light to him.

BOOK SIX

SOME VARIED ASPECTS OF URSUS

I.

WHAT THE MISANTHROPE SAID

After Ursus had seen Gwynplainé disappear under the door of Southwark jail, he remained, haggard, in the nook, which he had made his point of observation. For a long time his ear continued to hear that grinding noise of bolts and bars, which seemed the prison's howl of joy, upon devouring another wretch. He waited. For what? He watched. For what? Those inexorable doors, once closed, do not open again so soon; they are stiffened by their stagnation in darkness and their movements are difficult, especially when it is a question of deliverance; going in is all right; coming out, is different. Ursus knew it. But waiting is a thing that you are not free to stop doing at your own will. You wait in spite of yourself; the actions we do, bring an acquired force into play, which persists even when there is no longer an object; it possesses and holds us and obliges us to continue doing for some time longer, that which

henceforth is without an aim. Useless waiting is a silly posture that we have all kept up on certain occasions; a loss of time mechanically made by every man, watching a disappeared thing. Nobody can escape this law of inertia. You insist with a sort of absent-minded obstinacy. You do not know why you remain where you are, but yet you stay. What we have begun actively, we continue doing passively. A sort of exhausting tenacity which wears us out. Ursus, though differing from other men, was, nevertheless, nailed to the spot like any one else, by that compound of reverie and watchfulness, into which we are plunged by any event, which has all power over us, and over which we have none. He gazed in turns at the two black walls, now at the low one, and again at the high one, now at the door where there was a gallows ladder, then at the door over which there was a death's head; he seemed to be caught in that vice, made of a prison and a cemetery. This shunned and unpopular street, had so few passers-by, that Ursus was not noticed.

At last he came out of the corner, which had sheltered him, a sort of chance sentry-box, where he had been on watch, and went away with slow steps. The day was declining, he had been on guard so long. From time to

time he turned his head and looked at the low and awful wicket, through which Gwynplaine had entered. His eye was dull and glassy. He reached the end of the lane, turned into another street, then in another, almost unconsciously retracing the path he had followed some hours before. At intervals, he turned around, as if he could still see the prison door, although he was no longer in the street where the jail was. Little by little he approached Tarrinzeau-Field. The lanes near the fair-ground, were deserted paths between garden enclosures. He walked along the hedges and ditches, quite bent down. Suddenly he halted, and drawing himself up, exclaimed: "So much the better!"

At the same time, he struck his fists on his head, then on his thighs, which shows that a man is judging things as they should be judged.

And he began to mutter between his teeth, and at times with great outbursts:

"Serves him right! Ah! the beggar! the villain! the scamp! the good-for-nothing! the rebel! His speeches about the government led him there! He was a rebel. I had a rebel in my house. I am rid of him. It is lucky for me. He was compromising us. Sent to the galleys! Ah! so much the better! It shows the excellence of the laws. Ah! the

ungrateful wretch! I who brought him up! It was worth taking all that trouble! What business had he to speak and argue? He meddled with state questions! I would just like to know why? In handling pence he railed at the taxes, the poor, the people, at everything that was none of his business! He allowed himself to make remarks on pence! He commented wickedly and maliciously on the copper coinage of the kingdom! He insulted Her Majesty's farthings! A farthing, why, it is the same thing as the Queen! Her sacred effigy, egad, her sacred effigy. Have we a Queen, yes or no? Well, then, respect her verdigris. Everything about the government is connected. You have to know that. I have lived. I know things. They'll ask me: 'Do you give up politics?' Politics, my friends, I care as little about them, as about the rough coat of a jackass. One day, a baronet struck me with his cane. I said to myself: That's enough, I understand politics. The people have only a farthing, they give it, the Queen takes it, and the people thank her. Nothing could be simpler. All the rest concerns the lords. Their lordships, the lords spiritual and temporal. Ah! Gwynplaine is under lock and key! Ah! he is sent to the galleys! It is quite right. It is equitable, excellent, well deserved and legitimate. It is

his fault. Chattering is forbidden. Are you a lord, you idiot? The Wapentake has seized him, the justice of the quorum has carried him off, and the Sheriff holds him. At this moment he is, no doubt, being picked to pieces by some sergeant of the coif. How those clever people pluck your crimes out! Bagged, my fine fellow! So much the worse for him, so much the better for me! In faith, I am very glad of it. I, candidly confess that I am lucky. What an extravagance it was on my part to pick up that boy and girl! We were so quiet before that, Homo and I! What did those beggars come to my booth for? How I kept them warm in my nest when they were little! How I dragged them around by my collar harness! Pretty salvage that! He, atrociously ugly, and she, blind in both eyes! Just deny yourself everything! How I sucked at the breasts of famine for them! Then they grow up and fall in love! Flirtations between cripples, that's the stage we had reached. The toad and the mole—an idyl. That is what I had in my household. All that had to wind up with the police. The toad talked politics, that was fine. Now I am rid of him. When the Wapentake came, I was stupid at first, you always doubt your happiness. I thought I did not see what I was seeing, that it was impossible, that it was a

nightmare, that it was a trick which a dream was playing me. But no, there is nothing more real. It is plastic. Gwynplaine is really and truly in prison. It is a stroke of Providence. Thanks, good Madam. It was this monster, who with the noise that he made, drew attention to my establishment and denounced my poor wolf! Gwynplaine is off! And now, I am relieved of both. Two bumps raised with one pebble. For Dea will die of it. When she can no longer see Gwynplaine,—for she sees him, the idiot!—she will have no more reason for living, and she will say to herself: 'What am I doing in this world?' and she will go away too. Pleasant journey! Devil take them both! I always hated those two creatures! Die, Dea! Ah! I am so glad!"

II.

WHAT HE DOES

He reached Tadcaster Inn.

The half hour after six, or half-past six, as the English say, was striking. It was a little before twilight.

Master Nicless was standing on his door-step. His affrighted face had not succeeded in relaxing since the morning, and alarm seemed congealed there.

As far off as he could see Ursus—

"Well?" he cried.

"Well, what?"

"Is Gwynplaine coming back? It is high time. The public will soon begin to come. Shall we have a performance of the Laughing Man this evening?"

"I am the Laughing Man," said Ursus.

And he gazed at the inn-keeper with a burst of laughter.

Then he went straight up to the first story, opened the window near the sign of the inn, leaned out, stretched out his hand, pressed on

the placard of Gwynplaine—The Laughing Man—and on the bill-board of *Chaos Conquered*, unnailed the one, tore off the other, took the two boards under his arm, and came down.

Master Nicless followed him with his eyes.

"Why are you unhooking all that?"

Ursus burst out laughing again.

"Why are you laughing?" the inn-keeper went on.

"I am going back into private life."

Master Nicless understood, and gave the order, to his lieutenant, the boy Govicum, to announce to whoever came, that there would be no performance that evening. He took the hogshead-niche, where the entrance money was paid, away from the door, and put it into a corner of the drinking-room.

A moment later, Ursus went up into the Green-Box.

He set down the two placards in a corner, and entered what he called "the women's pavilion."

Dea was asleep.

She was on her bed, all dressed, with her bodice loosened, as when she took her day-time sleep.

Near her, Vinos and Fibi, one seated on a stool, the other on the ground, were meditating.

In spite of the lateness of the hour, they had not dressed themselves in their goddesses' tights, a sign of their deep discouragement. They were still muffled up in their coarse woolen waists and their heavy linen skirts.

Ursus contemplated Dea.

"She is rehearsing for a longer sleep," he murmured.

He addressed Fibi and Vinos.

"You understand, you two. The music is all over. You may put your trumpets in the drawer. You did well not to get yourselves up as deities. You are very ugly this way, but you have done well. Keep on your linen petticoats. No performance to-night. Nor to-morrow, nor day after to-morrow, nor day after that. No more Gwynplaine. No more Gwynplaine than there is in my hand."

Then he began to look at Dea again.

"What a shock this will be for her! It will be like blowing out a candle."

And he blew up his cheeks.

"Pough! And there will be nothing left."

He laughed a little dry laugh.

"Gwynplaine the less, is everything the less for her. It will be just as if I lost Homo. It will be worse. She will be more lonely than anyone else. The blind have to splash through more sorrow than we do."

He went to the small window at the back.

"How the days are lengthening! You can still see at seven o'clock. However, let us light the tallow."

He struck the flint and lighted the lantern which hung from the ceiling of the Green-Box.

He leaned over Dea.

"She will catch cold. Women, you have unlaced her clothes too much. There is the French proverb:

> "'Till April be sped,
> Keep on every thread.'"

He saw a pin shining on the ground, picked it up and stuck it in his sleeve. Then he walked up and down the Green-Box, gesticulating.

"I am in full possession of my faculties. I am lucid, extremely lucid. I find this event very correct, and I approve of what has happened. When she wakes up, I am going to tell her the incident just as it happened. The catastrophe will not be long in coming. No more Gwynplaine. Good-night, Dea. How well all that is arranged! Gwynplaine in prison. Dea in the cemetery. They will be opposite each other. A Dance of Death. Two destinies going off the stage. Let us pack up the costumes. Let us buckle the valise. For valise, read—coffin. Those

two creatures were failures. Dea, without eyes, and Gwynplaine without a face. Up above, God will give light to Dea, and beauty to Gwynplaine. Death sets things to rights. All is well. Fibi and Vinos, hang up your tambourines on the nail. Your talents for noise are going to rust, my beauties. There will be no more performing, and no more trumpeting. *Chaos Conquered* is conquered. The Laughing Man is cleaned out. Taratantara is dead. This Dea sleeps on. She does just as well. In her place, I would never wake up again. Bah! She will soon go to sleep again. A delicate little thing like that dies right off. That's what comes from meddling with politics. What a lesson! And how right all governments are! Gwynplaine to the Sheriff, Dea to the grave-digger. That's a parallel. And an instructive symmetry. I hope that the inn-keeper has barricaded the door. We are going to die quietly among ourselves this evening, in our own family circle. Not I, nor Homo. But Dea. I shall continue to make the old wagon roll. I belong to the meanders of vagabond life. I shall send away the two girls; I shall not keep even one of them. I have some tendency to be an old debauchee. A servant in a libertine's house, is like bread on a shelf. I don't want any temptation. It is not becoming

at my age. *Turpe senilis amor.* I shall continue on my way all alone with Homo. Homo is the one who is going to be astonished. 'Where is Gwynplaine?' 'Where is Dea?' Old comrade, here we are together again! Plague take it, I am delighted at it! Their bucolics were getting to be a bore. Ah! that wretch of a Gwynplaine, who does not even come back! He just plants us there. All right. Now it is Dea's turn. It will not be long. I like finished things. I would not give a fillip on the tip of the devil's nose to prevent her from dying. Die, do you hear me? Ah! she is waking up!"

Dea opened her eyelids; for many blind people close their eyes when they sleep. Her sweet face was radiant in its ignorance.

"She smiles," murmured Ursus, "and I am laughing. All goes well."

Dea called.

"Fibi! Vinos! It must be time for the performance. I think I have slept a long time. Come and dress me."

Neither Fibi nor Vinos stirred.

Meanwhile that ineffable look of the blind which Dea had, had just met Ursus' eye. He shuddered.

"Well!" he cried, "what are you doing? Vinos, Fibi, don't you hear your mistress?

Are you deaf? Quick! the performance is going to begin!"

The two women looked at Ursus, stupefied.

Ursus shouted,—

"Don't you see the public coming in? Fibi, dress Dea. Vinos, play on the tambourine."

Fibi was obedience. Vinos was passive. Together they personified submission. Their master, Ursus, had always been an enigma for them. Never to be understood, is one reason for always being obeyed. They simply thought that he was becoming crazy, and executed his orders. Fibi took down the costume and Vinos her drum.

Fibi began to dress Dea. Ursus let down the curtain of the women's room and, from behind the curtain, continued:

"Just look, Gwynplaine! The court is already half full of the crowd. They are jostling each other in the entrance. What a crowd! What do you say to Fibi and Vinos, who did not seem to notice it? How stupid these gypsies are! What fools there are in Egypt! Don't lift up the curtain. Be modest, Dea is dressing."

He made a pause, and suddenly this exclamation was heard:

"How beautiful Dea is!"

It was Gwynplaine's voice. Fibi and Vinos had a perfect shock and turned round.

It was Gwynplaine's voice, but came from Ursus' mouth.

Ursus, by a sign which he made through the curtains, forbid them to be astonished.

He resumed with Gwynplaine's voice:

"Angel!"

Then he replied with Ursus' voice—

"Dea, an angel! you are mad, Gwynplaine. There is no flying mammal except the bat."

And he added:

"Here, Gwynplaine, go and let Homo loose. That will be more to the purpose!"

And he went down the back stairs of the Green-Box, very quickly, in Gwynplaine's agile way. An imitative noise which Dea could hear.

In the court he saw the boy, that all this adventure was making idly inquisitive.

"Hold up your two hands," he said to him, quite low.

And he emptied a handful of pence into them.

Govicum was touched by this munificence.

Ursus whispered in his ear:

"Boy, stay in the court, jump, dance, hammer on things, howl, bawl, whistle, coo, neigh, applaud, stamp, burst out laughing, break things."

Master Nicless, humiliated and vexed at seeing the people who had come for the

Laughing Man, turn back, and go to the other booths of the fair field, had closed the door of the inn; he had even given up the intention of selling any drink that night, so as to save himself the annoyance of questions; and in the idleness of the postponed performance, he was looking down into the court, from the balcony above, candle in hand. Ursus, taking the precaution of putting his voice in parentheses between the palms of his two hands adjusted to his mouth, cried out to him,—

"Do as your boy is doing, sir, yelp, bark, howl."

He went up into the Green-Box again and said to the wolf,—

"Talk as much as you can."

And, raising his voice:

"There is too great a crowd. I think that we are going to have a very shaky performance."

Meantime Vinos was beating the drum.

Ursus went on:

"Dea is dressed. We can begin. I am sorry that I allowed so many people to come in. How they are packed! But just look, Gwynplaine! What a wild herd it is! I wager that we will make our biggest receipts to-day. Come, you women, start the music, both of you. Come in, Fibi, take your trumpet. Good, Vinos, thump your drum. Give

it a good drubbing. Fibi, pose as Fame. Young ladies, I do not find you nude enough. Take off those jackets. Let gauze take the place of linen. The public likes feminine forms. Let the moralists thunder. We will have a little immodesty, Egad! Let us be voluptuous. And dash into wild melodies. Snort, blow the horns, rattle, flourish and thump! What a crowd of people, my poor Gwynplaine!"

He interrupted himself:

"Gwynplaine, help me. Let us lower the panel."

Meantime, he opened out his handkerchief.

"But first let me bellow into my rag."

And he blew his nose energetically, as an engastrimyth should always do.

Having put his handkerchief back into his pocket, he drew back the pegs of the pulley, which made its usual creaking. The panel came down.

"Gwynplaine, it is useless to draw aside the curtain. Let us leave it down until the performance begins. We should not be sufficiently at home. You two, come on the stage. Music, young ladies! Poum! Poum! Poum! The audience is well made up. 'Tis the very dregs of the people. What rabble, good heavens!"

The two gypsies, stupidly obedient, took

their accustomed places, at the two angles of the lowered panel.

Then Ursus became extraordinary. He was no longer a man, he was a crowd. Forced to make fullness out of emptiness, he called his marvelous ventriloquism to his aid. All the orchestra of human and animal voices which he had in him, was set in motion at once. He made himself legion. Any one closing his eyes, would have thought he was in a public place on a festival day, or in a riot. The whirlwind of stammerings and of clamors which came out of Ursus, sang, bawled, talked, coughed, spit, sneezed, snuffed tobacco, held dialogues, made questions and answers, and did all that at once. Half-formed syllables ran into one another. In this court, where there was really nobody—men, women and children could be heard. It was the perfect confusion of a tumult. Through this din, there wound, as through a mist, some of the strangest discords, the clucking of birds, the spitting of cats, and the cries of nurslings. The hoarse voices of drunkards could be distinguished. The growls of discontented dogs, trampled under people's feet, could be heard. The voices came from near and from far, from above and from below, from the front and from the rear. Taken together, it was an uproar; in detail it was a

cry. Ursus thumped with his fists, kicked with his feet, threw his voice to the very back of the court, then made it come from underground. It was stormy and familiar. He passed from murmur to noise, from noise to tumult, from tumult to hurricane. He was himself and everybody. Soliloquist and polyglot. There is illusion for the eye, just as there is illusion for the ear. What Proteus did for sight, Ursus did for hearing. Nothing could be more marvelous than this facsimile of the multitude. From time to time he opened the curtain of the women's apartment, and looked at Dea. Dea was listening.

On his side, in the court-yard, the boy was behaving like one possessed.

Vinos and Fibi conscientiously lost their breath by blowing into their trumpets, and acted like mad with their drums. Master Nicless, the sole spectator, was quietly giving himself, as did the gypsies, the explanation that Ursus was crazy, which was but adding a pale item to his melancholy. The good inn-keeper murmured: "What insanity!" He was serious, like a man who remembers that there are laws.

Govicum, delighted to be useful in making a disturbance, behaved almost as wildly as Ursus. It amused him. Besides, he was earning his pennies.

Homo was pensive.

Ursus mingled words with his noise.

"'Tis just as usual, Gwynplaine, there is a cabal against us. Our rivals are undermining our success. Hooting seasons their triumph. And besides, there are too many people. They are not comfortable. The angles of your neighbor's elbows do not dispose you to kindliness. I hope they will not break down the benches! We are going to be the prey of a crazy populace. Ah! if our friend Tom-Jim-Jack were there! But he no longer comes. Just see all those heads, one above the other. Those who are standing up do not look happy, although standing up, according to Galen, is a movement, which that great man calls, 'the tonic movement.' We shall cut the performance short. As there is nothing but *Chaos Conquered* on the bill, we will not play *Ursus Rursus*. It will be just so much gained. What an uproar! Ah, blind turbulence of the masses! They certainly will do some damage! Oh! they cannot go on like that. We could not play. They would not hear a single word of the piece. I am going to address them. Gwynplaine, draw aside the curtain a little. Citizens—"

Here Ursus shouted at himself, in a sharp and peevish voice:

"Down with the old fellow!"

And he resumed with his own voice:

"I believe the people are insulting me. Cicero was right: *plebs, fex urbis.* Never mind, let us admonish the mob. I shall have much trouble in making myself heard. I will speak, nevertheless. Man, do thy duty. Gwynplaine, just look at that shrew gnashing her teeth down there."

Ursus paused, and made the sound of gnashing teeth. Homo, provoked, added a second one, and Govicum a third.

Ursus continued:

"Women are worse than men. This is not an auspicious moment. All the same, let us try the power of a discourse. It is always time to be eloquent. Listen to this insinuating exordium, Gwynplaine.—Ladies and gentlemen—citizens, I am the bear. I take off my head to speak to you. I humbly ask for silence."

Ursus made this sound, pretending it came from the crowd:

"Grumphll!"

And continued:

"I respect my audience. Grumphll is as good an expression as any other. Greetings, you swarming population. I have not the least doubt, that you belong to the very dregs. That does not lessen my esteem. A well considered esteem. I have the profoundest

respect for the gentlemanly bullies who honor me with their patronage. There are deformed persons among you, but I take no offence. The lame and the humpbacked are a part of nature. The camel is gibbous; the bison has a swollen back; the badger's legs are shorter on the left than on the right side; this fact is determined by Aristotle in his treatise on the walk of animals. Those among you who own two shirts, have one on your back and the other at the money-lender's. I know that such things are done. Albuquerque used to pawn his moustache, and Saint Denis his halo. The Jews used to lend, even on the halo. These are great examples. To have debts, is to have something. I respect beggars in you."

Ursus broke in upon himself with the following interruption, made in deep bass:

"Triple ass!"

And he replied in his most polite tone:

"I agree with you. I am a learned man. I apologize for it as well as I can. I despise science scientifically. Ignorance is a reality, with which one feeds one's self; science is a reality, on which one starves. In general, one is obliged to choose between being a learned man and growing lean, and browsing, and being an ass. Browse, oh, citizens! Science is not worth a single mouthful of anything

good. I would rather eat a sirloin of beef, than know that it is called the psoas muscle. As for me, I have but one merit. It is to have a dry eye. Just as you see me here, I have never wept. I must say that I have never been satisfied, either. Never satisfied. Not even with myself. I despise myself. But I submit this to the members of the Opposition here present—if Ursus is merely a learned man, Gwynplaine is an artist."

He snorted again:

"Grumphll!"

And resumed:

"Grumphll again! That is an objection. Nevertheless, I pass it by. And Gwynplaine, O, ladies and gentlemen! has another artist near him, that distinguished and hairy personage, Lord Homo, formerly a wild dog, now a civilized wolf, and a faithful subject of Her Majesty. Homo is an actor of deep and superior talents. Be attentive and collected. You are going to see Homo act, as well as Gwynplaine, and we must honor art. That becomes great nations. Are you men from the woods? I'll subscribe that. In that case, *sylvae sunt consule digna.* Two artists are surely worth as much as a consul. There now! Some one has flung a cabbage-stalk at me. But it did not hit me. It will not prevent me from speaking. On the contrary, escaping from

danger makes one talkative. *Garrula pericula*, says Juvenal. There are drunken men among you, my good people, and drunken women, too. That's all right. The men are disgusting; the women, hideous. You have all sorts of excellent reasons for crowding here on these tavern-benches; want of work, idleness, the interval between two robberies, porter, ale, stout, malt, brandy, gin, and the attraction of one sex for the other. It's admirable. A mind inclined to jesting, would find a fair field here. But I refrain. It may be lewdness. Yet, even an orgy must have some sort of decorum. You are gay, but noisy. You imitate the cries of beasts remarkably well; but what would you say, if when you were making love to a lady in a dirty garret, I spent my time barking at you? It would annoy you. Well, it annoys us. I authorize you to be silent. Art is just as respectable as debauch. I speak to you candidly."

He shouted at himself:

"May fever strangle you, with your eyebrows like bearded rye!"

And he replied:

"Honorable gentlemen, let us leave ears of rye alone. It is impious to do violence to vegetables, by finding resemblances between them and human beings and animals. Besides

fever does not strangle. That is a false metaphor. For mercy's sake, be silent! Permit me to tell you, that you lack a little of the majesty which characterizes the true English gentleman! I notice that those among you, who have shoes through which their toes peep, take advantage of this, to place their feet on the shoulders of the spectators in front of them, which causes the ladies to make the remark, that soles always burst at the head of the metatarsal bones. Show a little less of your feet, and a little more of your hands. I can see knaves from here, who are plunging their clever claws in their stupid neighbors' pockets. Dear pickpockets, have a little decency. Fight your neighbor, if you want to, but don't plunder him. You'll vex people less by blacking an eye than by filching a penny. Damage their noses, it will be all right. The tradesman cares more for his money, than his beauty. At all events, accept my sympathy. I am not such a pedant as to blame rascals. Evil certainly exists. Every one endures it, and every one does it. No one is exempt from the vermin of his sins. That is the only kind I mention. Have we not all of us our itch? God scratches himself in the devil's direction. Even I have committed faults. *Plaudite cives.*"

Ursus gave vent to a long groan, which he

at last seemed to dominate by these closing words:

"My lords and gentlemen, I see that my discourse has had the good fortune to displease you. I take leave of your hootings for a moment. Now, I am going to put on my head again, and the performance will begin."

He dropped his oratorical accent for his familiar manner.

"Close the curtain. Let us take breath. I was mellifluous. I spoke well. I called them my lords and gentlemen. Velvety, but useless, language. What do you say to all that rabble, Gwynplaine? How well one can understand all the ills which England has suffered for the past forty years, by the passions of these soured and spiteful spirits! The ancient English were warlike; these are melancholy and enlightened, and they glory in despising the laws, and not recognizing royal authority. I have done all that human eloquence can do. I wasted metonomy, which was as graceful as the blooming cheek of youth, on them. Are they softened? I doubt it. What can you expect of a nation, which eats so extraordinarily and stuffs itself with tobacco to such an extent, that in this country, even men of letters often compose their works, with a

pipe in their mouth! Never mind, let's play the piece."

The curtain-rings were heard sliding on their bar. The gypsies ceased thumping their drums. Ursus took down his hurdy-gurdy from the wall, played his prelude, and said in a low voice: "Say, Gwynplaine, isn't this mysterious?" then rolled over and over with the wolf.

Yet, at the time when he took down his hurdy-gurdy, he had also taken a very rough wig he owned, from a nail, and had thrown it on the floor, in a corner within his reach.

The performance of *Chaos Conquered* took place, almost as usual, minus the blue light effects and the magical illuminations. The wolf played in earnest. At the proper moment, Dea made her appearance, and with her trembling and divine voice evoked Gwynplaine. She stretched out her arm, seeking that head. . . . .

Ursus pounced on the wig, ruffled it, put it on, and, holding his breath, softly brought his bristling head under Dea's hand.

Then, summoning all his art to his aid, and imitating Gwynplaine's voice, he sang the monster's reply to the call of the spirit, with ineffable love.

The imitation was so perfect, that the two gypsies again sought Gwynplaine with their

eyes, frightened at hearing him, without seeing him.

Govicum, astounded, stamped, applauded, clapped his hands, made an Olympian uproar, and laughed, although alone, like a troop of gods. This boy, it must be admitted, displayed a rare talent as a spectator.

Fibi and Vinos, those automatons whose springs Ursus worked, made the usual clamor of instruments—mingled brass and ass's hide—which marked the end of the performance, and accompanied the public's departure.

Ursus rose, covered with perspiration.

He whispered to Homo: "You understand that it was necessary to gain time. I think we have succeeded. I think I did not do badly; I, who, nevertheless, had a right to be well nigh distracted. Gwynplaine may still return between now and to-morrow. It was useless to kill Dea all at once. I explain the matter to you, you see."

He took off the wig and wiped his forehead.

"I am a genius as a ventriloquist," he murmured. "What talent I displayed! I equalled Brabant, the engastrimyth of the King of France, Francis I. Dea is convinced that Gwynplaine is here."

"Ursus," said Dea, "where is Gwynplaine?"

Ursus turned around, with a start.

Dea had remained at the back of the theatre, under the ceiling lantern. She was pale, with a shadow's pallor.

She went on with an ineffable smile of despair:

"I know. He has left us. He is gone. I knew very well that he had wings."

And raising her sightless eyes towards space, she added:

"When will it be my turn?"

III.

COMPLICATIONS

Ursus was struck dumb.

He had not produced any illusion.

Was it the fault of his ventriloquism? Certainly not. He had succeeded in deceiving Fibi and Vinos who had eyes; and not in deceiving Dea, who was blind. That was because Fibi and Vinos had only clear eyes, while in Dea's case, it was her heart that saw.

He could not answer a word. And he thought to himself: *Bos in lingua.* The dumbfounded man has an ox on his tongue.

In complex emotions, humiliation is the first feeling that breaks through. Ursus thought:

"I have wasted all my onomatopoeïa."

And like every dreamer driven to the foot of the wall of expedients, he reviled himself:

"I have fallen flat! I exhausted imitative harmony at a dead loss. But what is going to become of us now?"

He looked at Dea. She was silent, growing paler and paler, without stirring. Her sightless eyes remained fixed on space.

Something happened just at the right moment.

Ursus saw Master Nicless in the court, candle in hand, beckoning to him.

Master Nicless had not been present at the end of the sort of phantom-comedy played by Ursus. This was because some one had knocked at the door of the inn. Master Nicless had gone to open it. There had been two knocks at the door, which had caused two eclipses of Master Nicless. Ursus, absorbed by his hundred-voiced monologue, had not noticed all this.

Upon Master Nicless' silent call, Ursus went down.

He went up to the inn-keeper.

Ursus laid a finger on his lip.

Master Nicless laid a finger on his lip.

The two looked at each other thus.

Each one seemed to say to the other: "Let us talk, but let us hold our tongues."

The inn-keeper silently opened the door of the lower room of the inn. Master Nicless went in, Ursus went in. There was no one there, except those two. The front towards the street, door and shutters, was closed.

The inn-keeper pushed the court-yard door

behind him, and it closed in the face of the inquisitive Govicum.

Master Nicless set the candle on the table.

The dialogue began. Quite low, like a whisper.

"Master Ursus . . ."

"Master Nicless?"

"I understand at last."

"Bah!"

"You wanted to make that poor blind girl believe that everything here was as usual."

"There is no law forbidding me to be a ventriloquist."

"You are clever."

"No."

"It's wonderful, to what a degree you do what you want to do."

"I tell you, it is not so."

"Now, I have to tell you something."

"Is it politics?"

"I don't know."

"Because, if it were, I should not listen."

"It is this. While you were playing the piece and the public all by yourself, some one knocked at the tavern door."

"Some one knocked at the door?"

"Yes."

"I don't like that."

"Neither do I."

"What next?"

"And then I opened the door."

"Who knocked?"

"Some one who spoke to me."

"What did he say?"

"I listened to him."

"What did you answer?"

"Nothing. I came back to see you play."

"And? . . ."

"And then they knocked a second time."

"Who? The same person?"

"No. Another."

"Some one else who spoke to you?"

"Some one who said nothing to me."

"I prefer him."

"Not I."

"Explain yourself, Master Nicless."

"Guess who knocked the first time?"

"I have no time to be Œdipus."

"It was the circus master."

"The one next door?"

"The one next door."

"Where there is all that maddening music?"

"Maddening."

"Well?"

"Well, Master Ursus, he makes you an offer."

"An offer?"

"An offer."

"Why?"

"Because."

"You have an advantage over me, Master Nicless, which is, that just now you understood my enigma, and now, I, do not understand yours."

"The circus master, bade me tell you, that he saw the police escort go by this morning, and that he, the circus master, wishing to prove to you that he is your friend, offers to buy from you, for fifty pounds cash, your wagon, the Green-Box, with your two horses, your trumpets, with the women who blow them, your piece with the blind girl who sings in it, your wolf, and you with it."

Ursus smiled haughtily.

"Master of Tadcaster Inn, you can tell the circus owner that Gwynplaine is coming back."

The inn-keeper took something from a chair which was in the dark, and turned towards Ursus with his two arms raised, while from one hand there hung a cloak and from the other a leather collar, a felt hat and a jacket.

"The man who knocked the second time, was a policeman, he came in and went out again, without saying a word, and brought these."

Ursus recognized Gwynplaine's collar, jacket, hat and cloak.

IV.

MŒNIBUS SURDIS CAMPANA MUTA

Ursus fingered the felt of the hat, the cloth of the cloak, the serge of the jacket, the leather of the collar, could not doubt these cast-off garments, and with a quick and imperative gesture, without saying a word to Master Nicless, pointed to the inn-door.

Master Nicless opened it.

Ursus rushed out of the tavern.

Master Nicless followed him with his eyes, and saw Ursus run as fast as his old legs would permit, in the direction taken in the morning, by the Wapentake who led Gwynplaine away. A quarter of an hour later Ursus, all out of breath, reached the little street, where the back gate of Southwark jail opened, and where he had already spent so many hours watching.

This lane did not need midnight to make it deserted. But though dreary by day, it was alarming at night. After a certain hour, no one risked going through it. It seemed

as if people feared that the two walls might draw near to each other, and were afraid that if the prison and the cemetery might take a fancy to embrace, that they would be crushed by that embrace. These were the effects produced by darkness. The truncated willows of Vauvert Lane in Paris had a similar sort of ill-fame. People said, that at night these tree stumps became enormous hands and caught hold of passers-by.

The people of Southwark, as we have said, instinctively avoided the street between the prison and the cemetery. Formerly it had been barred at night by an iron chain. It had been very useless; for the best chain to close that street, was the fear it inspired.

Ursus entered it resolutely.

What idea had he? None.

He came to this street for information. Was he going to knock at the gate of the jail? Certainly not. This vain and fearful expedient did not germinate in his brain. Try to introduce himself there to ask for information? What folly! Prisons do not any more open for those who want to get in, than for those who want to go out. Their hinges only turn on the law. Ursus knew it. What did he want to do in that street? See. See what? Nothing. One cannot know. Possibilities. To find himself once more face

to face with the door through which Gwynplaine had disappeared, was something. Sometimes the blackest and the most morose wall speaks, and a gleam comes out from between the stones. A pale exudation of light sometimes pierces a closed and sombre mass. To examine the envelope of a fact, is to be watching usefully. We all have the instinct of leaving as little thickness as possible, between the fact which interests us and ourselves. That is why Ursus had returned to the lane, where the low entrance to the prison was situated.

At the very moment he entered the lane, he heard the stroke of a bell, then a second one.

"What," thought he, "can it be midnight already?"

Mechanically he began to count.

"Three, four, five."

He mused.

"What long intervals there are between the strokes of this bell! How slow they are! Six, seven."

And he made this remark:

"What a lamentable sound! Eight, nine. —Ah! nothing could be more natural. It makes a clock grow sad to be in a prison.— Ten.—And then, the cemetery is there. That bell strikes the hour for the living and Eternity

for the dead.—Eleven.—Alas! to strike the hour for whoever is not free, is to strike eternity, too!—Twelve."

He stopped.

"Yes, it is midnight."

The bell struck a thirteenth stroke.

Ursus shuddered.

"Thirteen!"

There was a fourteenth stroke. Then a fifteenth.

"What does this mean?"

The strokes continued at long intervals. Ursus listened.

"It is not the striking of a clock. It is the bell Muta. That is why I said to myself: 'How long it takes to strike midnight!' This bell is not striking, it is tolling. What dreadful thing is happening here?"

Formerly every prison, as well as every monastery, had its bell, called Muta, kept for melancholy occasions. The Muta, "the mute," was a bell which struck very low, and seemed to be doing its best not to be heard.

Ursus had gone back to the convenient nook for spying, whence he had been able, during a great part of the day, to watch the prison.

The strokes followed at a melancholy distance from each other.

A knell makes an ugly punctuation in space. It marks funereal paragraphs in everybody's pre-occupations. The tolling of a bell resembles a man's death-rattle. It announces an agony. If, in these houses here and there, in the neighborhood of this tolling bell, there are scattered and wavering reveries, the knell cuts them into rigid fragments. Vague reverie is a sort of refuge; there is an unknown diffusion in anguish which allows some hope to pierce it; the knell which is disheartening, makes everything distinct. It suppresses all diffusion, and forces the cloudiness, in which anxiety tries to remain in suspense, to fall as a precipitate. A knell addresses each person in the sense of his own sorrow or terror. A tragic bell, is something which concerns you. It is a warning. Nothing can be gloomier than the monologue on which this cadence falls. The even repetitions indicate an intention. What does that hammer, the bell, forge on that anvil, thought?

Ursus confusedly counted the strokes of the knell, although he had no aim in doing so. Feeling himself losing his mental footing, he made an effort not to start any conjectures. Conjectures are an inclined plane on which one goes too far, uselessly. Nevertheless, what did that bell signify?

He looked into darkness, towards the spot where he knew the prison door to be.

Suddenly, at the very spot, which made a sort of black hole, there was a red gleam. This gleam grew and became a bright spot.

This red gleam had nothing vague about it. It had a shape and angles at once. The jail door had just turned on its hinges. The red gleam outlined the arch and the casings.

It was a yawning rather than an opening. A prison does not open: it yawns. With weariness, perhaps.

The wicket gate gave passage to a man who bore a torch in his hand.

The bell did not stop. Ursus felt himself seized by two expectations: he went on watch, his ear on the knell, his eye on the torch.

After the man, the door which had only been ajar, opened wide, and let out two other men, and then a fourth. This fourth was the Wapentake, visible by the torchlight. He had his iron staff in his hand.

Following the Wapentake, some silent men who came through the wicket gate in order, two by two, filed out with the rigidity of a series of walking posts.

This nocturnal procession, passed out of the low door, in pairs, like the walking attendants of a procession of penitents, without a

break, and with a mournful care not to make any noise; gravely, almost softly. A serpent coming out of a hole, uses such precaution.

The torch made the profiles and the attitudes stand out in relief. Fierce profiles, mournful attitudes.

Ursus recognized all the faces of the police, who had led Gwynplaine away in the morning.

There was no doubt. They were the same. They re-appeared.

Evidently Gwynplaine was going to re-appear also.

They had taken him there; they were bringing him back.

It was plain.

Ursus' eye grew more fixed. Would they set Gwynplaine free?

The double file of police flowed out of the low vault very slowly, and, as if, drop by drop. The bell, which struck uninterruptedly, seemed to mark their steps. On leaving the prison, the escort, turning its back on Ursus, wheeled to the right, in that part of the street opposite to the one in which he was posted.

A second torch shone under the door-way.

This announced the end of the procession.

Ursus was about to see whom they were leading away. The prisoner. The man.

Ursus was going to see Gwynplaine.

What they were leading away, appeared.

It was a bier.

Four men carried a bier, covered with a black cloth.

Behind them, came a man having a spade on his shoulder.

A third lighted torch, held by a person reading from a book, who must have been the chaplain, closed the procession.

The bier took its place in the file behind the police, who had turned to the right.

At the same time the head of the escort stopped.

Ursus heard the grating of a key.

Opposite the prison, in the low wall which ran along the other side of the street, a second door-way was lighted up by a torch passing under it.

This door, on which a death's head could be seen, was the cemetery door.

The Wapentake passed through this door, then the men, then the second torch after the first; the escort decreased like a reptile crawling home; the whole file of police penetrated into the obscurity which was beyond that door, then the bier, then the man with the spade, then the chaplain with his torch and his book, and the door closed.

There was nothing left but a gleam over the wall.

A whisper was heard, then dull blows.

No doubt these were caused by the chaplain and the grave-digger, one of whom threw verses of prayer, the other, spadefuls of earth, on the coffin.

The whisper ceased, the dull blows ceased.

There was a movement, the torches shone, the Wapentake, carrying his weapon aloft, passed out of the re-opened cemetery door, the chaplain came back with his book, the grave-digger with his spade, the whole escort re-appeared, without the coffin; the double file of men made the same trip between the two doors with the same taciturnity, but in the contrary direction; the cemetery gate closed again, the prison door re-opened, the sepulchral vault of the wicket gate stood out in the light, the obscurity of the corridor became dimly visible, the thick and deep darkness of the jail presented itself to the eye, then all the vision fell back into all that gloom.

The knell ceased. Silence, the ominous lock of darkness, came and closed everything.

This was all that was left of the vanished apparition.

A passage of fleeting spectres.

Sequent events when they coincide logically, end by constructing something which resembles evidence. So, to Gwynplaine's arrest, to the silent manner of this arrest,

to his garments brought back by the police, to the knell in the prison to which he had been taken, to all this, there now came to add itself, let us rather say, adjust itself, this tragic fact,—a coffin carried to the grave.

"He is dead!" cried Ursus.

He sank down on a low stone. "Dead! They have killed him! Gwynplaine! my child! my son!"

And he sobbed aloud.

V.

STATE REASONS WORK IN SMALL THINGS AS WELL AS IN GREAT

Ursus, he had boasted of it, alas! had never wept. The reservoir of tears was full. Such plenitude, as is accumulated, drop by drop, and grief by grief, during a long existence, does not run dry in an instant. Ursus sobbed a long time.

A first tear is a puncture. He wept for Gwynplaine, for Dea, for himself, Ursus, for Homo. He cried like a child. He wept like an old man. He wept for all that he had laughed at. He paid up all arrears. Man's right to tears never lapses.

The dead man who had just been buried however, was Hardquanonne; but Ursus was not obliged to know that.

Many hours elapsed.

Day began to break; the pale mantle of morning, with folds of shadow here and there, spread over the bowling-green. Dawn came to whiten the front of Tadcaster Inn. Master Nicless had not gone to bed; for sometimes

one and the same fact, produces several cases of insomnia.

Catastrophes spread out in all directions. Throw a stone in the water, and count the splashes.

Master Nicless felt himself injured. It is very disagreeable to have adventures happen under your roof. Master Nicless was but little reassured, and foreseeing complications, was meditating. He regretted having received "those people" at his house. If he had only known!—They would wind up by dragging him into some bad business or other.—How could he put them out now?—He had a lease with Ursus.—What luck if he were but rid of him!—How could he manage to drive them away?

Suddenly there was one of those tumultuous knocks at the door of the inn, which, in England, announce "Some one." The gamut of knocks corresponds to the scale of the hierarchy.

It was not quite a lord's knock, but it was a magistrate's knock.

The inn-keeper, trembling all over, slightly opened his little window.

It was, indeed, a magistrate. In the faint light, Master Nicless saw a group of police at his door, at the head of which, two men stood apart, one of whom was the justice of the quorum.

Master Nicless had seen the justice of the quorum in the morning, and knew him.

He did not know the other man.

He was a fat gentleman, with a wax-colored face, a fashionable wig and a traveling cloak.

Master Nicless was greatly afraid of the first of these personages, the justice of the quorum. If Master Nicless had belonged to the court, he would have been still more afraid of the second, for it was Barkilphedro.

One of the men in the group knocked violently at the door, a second time.

The inn-keeper, with great beads of perspiration, caused by anxiety, on his forehead, opened it.

The justice of the quorum in the tone of a man in charge of the police, and who is perfectly acquainted with the whole list of vagabonds, raised his voice and severely asked:

"Master Ursus?"

The inn-keeper, hat in hand, answered:

"It is here, Your Honor."

"I know it," said the justice.

"No doubt, Your Honor."

"Let him come here."

"Your Honor, he is not here."

"Where is he?"

"I do not know."

"How is that?"

"He has not come home."

"Then he must have gone out very early."

"No. But he went out very late."

"These vagabonds!" said the justice.

"Your Honor," said Master Nicless softly, "there he is."

Ursus, indeed, had just appeared at the turn of a wall. He was just coming to the inn. He had spent nearly all the night, between the jail where he had seen Gwynplaine enter at noon, and the cemetery, where he had heard a grave filled at midnight. He was pale with two pallors, his sadness and the twilight.

Dawn, which is light in its ghostlike condition, leaves all forms, even morning ones, mingled with the indistinctness of night. Ursus, wan and dim, walking slowly, looked like a figure in a dream.

In the wild distraction caused by anguish, he had left the inn bare-headed. He had not even noticed that he wore no hat. His sparse gray hair waved in the wind. His open eyes did not seem to see. We are often asleep when we are awake, just as it happens, that when asleep, we are awake. Ursus had a wild look.

"Master Ursus," cried the inn-keeper, "come here. Their Honors wish to speak to you."

Master Nicless, solely pre-occupied in smoothing down the incident, dropped, and at

the same time, would have liked to hâve held back, that plural, "Their Honors," which though respectful for the group, might perhaps have been offensive for the chief, who was thus confounded with his subordinates.

Ursus started like a man suddenly flung out of a bed, in which he had been sleeping soundly.

"What is it?" said he.

And he saw the police, and at the head of the police, the magistrate.

This was a new and severe shock.

Just a while ago it was the Wapentake, now it was the justice of the quorum. One seemed to fling him to the other. There are old stories of reefs like this.

The justice of the quorum motioned him to enter the tavern.

Ursus obeyed.

Govicum, who had just arisen, and was sweeping the room, stopped, crouched behind the tables, put down his broom, and held his breath. He plunged his fist in his hair and vaguely scratched his head, which indicates attention to passing events.

The justice of the quorum sat down on a bench before a table; Barkilphedro took a chair. Ursus and Master Nicless remained standing. The police, left outside, grouped themselves around the closed door.

The justice of the quorum fixed his legal eye on Ursus, and said:

"You have a wolf."

Ursus answered:

"Not exactly."

"You have a wolf," resumed the justice, emphasizing "wolf" with a decisive accent.

Ursus replied:

"That is . . ."

And he was silent.

"Misdemeanor," said the justice.

Ursus hazarded this plea:

"He is my servant."

The justice placed his hand flat on the table, with his five fingers spread apart, which is a very fine gesture of authority.

"Juggler, to-morrow, at this hour, you and your wolf, will have quitted England. If not, the wolf will be seized, taken to the registry and killed."

Ursus thought: "A continuation of the assassinations." But he did not breathe a word, and was content to tremble in every limb.

"Do you hear?" resumed the justice.

Ursus assented by a nod.

The justice repeated:

"Killed."

There was a pause.

"Strangled or drowned."

The justice of the quorum looked at Ursus.

"And you to prison."

Ursus murmured:

"Judge . . ."

"Be gone before to-morrow morning. If not, such is the order."

"Judge . . ."

"What?"

"Must we leave England, he and I?"

"Yes."

"To-day?"

"To-day."

"How can I do it?"

Master Nicless was happy. This magistrate whom he had dreaded, came to his aid. The police made itself his, Nicless', auxiliary. It delivered him from "those people." They brought him the very means he was seeking. This Ursus, whom he wished to get rid of, was being driven away by the police. By superior power. There were no objections to make. He was delighted.

He interposed.

"Your Honor, that man . . ."

And he pointed at Ursus.

"That man asks how he can leave England to-day? Nothing is easier. Every day and every night, there are ships at the Thames moorings, both on this side of London Bridge and the other, which leave for other

countries. People go from England to Denmark, Holland, Spain, not to France, on account of the war, but everywhere. To-night, several ships will leave, about one o'clock in the morning, which is the hour of high tide. Among others, the ship *Vograat* for Rotterdam."

The justice of the quorum shrugged his shoulder towards Ursus.

"So be it. Leave by the first ship you can get. By the *Vograat*."

"Judge," said Ursus.

"Well?"

"Judge, if I had only my little wheeled hut, as formerly, it would be easy. It would go on board a ship. But . . ."

"But what?"

"But now I have the Green-Box, which is a big machine with two horses, and, however large a ship may be, it will never go on board."

"What is that to me?" said the justice. "The wolf will be killed."

Ursus, shuddering, felt himself being handled by an icy hand. "Killing people! That's their expedient."

The inn-keeper smiled and addressed Ursus.

"Master Ursus, you can sell the Green-Box."

Ursus looked at Nicless.

"Master Ursus, you have an offer."

"From whom?"

"An offer for the wagon. An offer for the two horses. An offer for the gypsy women. An offer. . . ."

"From whom?" repeated Ursus.

"From the neighboring circus proprietor."

"That is true."

Ursus remembered.

Master Nicless turned towards the justice of the quorum.

"Your Honor, the bargain can be made this very day. The owner of the circus next door wants to buy the big wagon and the two horses."

"The owner of the circus is right," said the justice, "for he will need them. A wagon and horses will be useful for him. He, too, will leave to-day. The reverend gentlemen of the parishes of Southwark have complained of the obscene uproar of Tarrinzeau-Field. The sheriff has taken his measures. This evening, there will not be a single mountebank's booth on this square. There will be an end of the scandals. The honorable gentleman who deigns to be here present . . ."

The justice of the quorum interrupted himself by a bow to Barkilphedro, which Barkilphedro returned.

"The honorable gentleman who deigns to be here present, arrived from Windsor last night. He brings orders. Her Majesty has said: 'That must be cleared away.'"

Ursus in his long meditation through the night, had not failed to ask himself some questions. After all, he had only seen a bier. Was he very sure that Gwynplaine was in it? There could be other dead men on earth besides Gwynplaine. A passing coffin is not a deceased man who names himself. Following upon Gwynplaine's arrest, there had been a burial. That proved nothing at all. *Post hoc, non propter hoc.*—etc. Ursus had gone back to doubting. Hope burns and shines upon anguish like naphtha upon water. This unsinking flame floats eternally on human grief. Ursus had finally said to himself: "It is probable that it was Gwynplaine who was buried, but it is not certain. Who knows? Perhaps Gwynplaine is still living."

Ursus bowed before the justice.

"Honorable judge, I will leave. We will leave. We will all leave. By the *Vograat.* For Rotterdam. I obey. I will sell the Green-Box, the horses, the trumpets, the gypsy women. But there is some one who is with me, a comrade, and whom I cannot leave behind me, Gwynplaine! . . ."

"Gwynplaine is dead," said a voice.

Ursus had the impression of a reptile's cold touch on his skin. It was Barkilphedro who had just spoken.

The last gleam vanished. No more doubt. Gwynplaine was dead.

This individual ought to know it. He was ominous enough for it.

Ursus bowed.

Master Nicless was a very good man, except for his cowardice. But when he was frightened, he was atrocious. Fear is the supreme ferocity.

He grumbled:

"This simplifies things."

And behind Ursus he rubbed his hands in the way peculiar to egoists, which signifies: "I'm rid of them!" and which looks as if it were done over Pontius Pilate's wash-basin.

Ursus bowed his head, completely overwhelmed. Gwynplaine's sentence had been carried out in death; and, as for him, he had been informed of his verdict, exile. There was nothing left but to obey. He was thinking.

He felt some one touch his elbow. It was the other personage, the acolyte of the justice of the quorum. Ursus shuddered.

The voice which had said: *Gwynplaine is dead*, whispered in his ear: "Here are ten pounds sterling sent by some one who wishes you well."

And Barkilphedro put a little purse down on a table in front of Ursus.

The casket carried off by Barkilphedro will be remembered.

Ten guineas on two thousand, was all Barkilphedro could do. In all conscience, it was enough. If he had given more, he would have lost upon it. He had taken the pains to discover a lord, and he began to exploit that discovery, it was but right that the first yield of the mine should belong to him. Those who may see meanness in this, may be right, but they would be wrong to be astonished. Barkilphedro loved money, especially stolen money. Every envious man contains a miser. Barkilphedro was not without his faults. Committing crimes does not prevent one from having vices. Tigers have lice.

Besides it was according to the school of Bacon. Barkilphedro turned towards the justice of the quorum, and said to him:

"Sir, be so good as to conclude. I am in great haste. A coach drawn by Her Majesty's own relays awaits me. I must start at greatest speed for Windsor, and be there before two hours are over. I have reports to make and orders to receive."

The justice of the quorum rose.

He went to the door, which was only latched, opened it, looked at the police,

without saying a word, and a lightning flash of authority sprang from his fore-finger. All the group entered with that peculiar silence wherein one feels the approach of something stern.

Master Nicless, satisfied with the rapid unraveling which cut all complications short, charmed to be out of this tangled skein, feared, when he saw this deploying of the police, that Ursus would be arrested in his house. Two arrests in succession there, first Gwynplaine's and then that of Ursus, might harm the tavern, drinkers not being fond of police disturbances. It was the moment for a suitably supplicating and generous intervention. Master Nicless turned his smiling face, in which confidence was tempered by respect, towards the justice of the quorum:

"Your Honor, I would call Your Honor's attention to the fact that these honorable gentlemen of the police, are not indispensable here, since the guilty wolf is going to be taken out of England, and the person named Ursus makes no resistance, and that Your Honor's orders are to be punctually followed. Your Honor will please consider that the respectable actions of the police, so necessary to the welfare of the kingdom, harm an establishment, and that my house is innocent. The

mountebanks of the Green-Box, being cleared away, as Her Majesty says, I no longer see any criminal person here, for I do not suppose that the blind girl and the two gypsy women are delinquents, and I would implore Your Honor to deign to abridge his august visit, and to dismiss the worthy gentlemen who have just come in, for they have nothing to do in my house, and if Your Honor would permit me to prove the justice of my saying in the form of an humble question, I would make the uselessness of the presence of these venerable gentlemen evident, by asking Your Honor: 'Since the aforesaid Ursus complies and departs, whom can they have to arrest here?' "

"You," said the justice.

There is no arguing with a sword-thrust, which cuts clean through you. Master Nicless dropped down on no matter what, on a table, on a bench, on whatever was near, crushed.

The justice raised his voice so much that had there been any people in the square, they would have heard him.

"Master Nicless Plumptre, inn-keeper of this inn, this is the last point to settle. This juggler and this wolf are vagabonds. They are driven away. But you are the most guilty. It was in your house and with your consent,

that the law has been violated, and you, a licensed man, invested with a public responsibility, installed the scandal in your house. Master Nicless, your license is withdrawn, you will have to pay the fine, and go to prison."

The police officers surrounded the innkeeper.

The justice, pointing to Govicum, continued:

"This boy, your accomplice, is seized."

A policeman's fist came down on Govicum's collar, who looked at the officer with curiosity. The boy, not very much frightened, understood but little, yet had seen more than one singular thing, and asked himself whether this was the continuation of the comedy.

The justice of the quorum pulled his hat well down on his head, crossed his two hands on his stomach, which is the climax of majesty, and added:

"As I have said, Master Nicless, you will be taken to prison and put in jail. You and that boy. And this house, Tadcaster Inn, shall remain shut, condemned and closed. As an example. Upon which, you will follow us."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE LAUGHING MAN

VOLUME III

BOOK III—THE BEGINNING OF THE RIFT

	CHAPTER	PAGE
Tadcaster Inn	I	7
Open-Air Eloquence	II	13
Wherein the Passer-by Re-appears	III	22
Contraries Fraternize in Hate	IV	32
The Wapentake	V	40
The Mouse Questioned by the Cats	VI	46
What Reasons can a Doubloon have for Mixing in the Low Company of Copper Pence?	VII	60
Symptoms of Poisoning	VIII	71
Abyssus Abyssum Vocat	IX	79

BOOK IV—THE PENAL VAULT

The Temptation of Saint Gwynplaine	I	97
From the Agreeable to the Severe	II	110
Lex, Rex, Fex	III	122
Ursus Acts as a Spy on the Police	IV	127

	CHAPTER	PAGE
A Bad Place	V.	135
What Kind of Magistracy There Was Under the Wigs of Former Days	VI.	139
Shuddering	VII.	146
Groaning	VIII.	150

BOOK V—THE SEA AND FATE MOVE UNDER THE SAME BREATH

The Solidity of Fragile Things	I.	177
That Which Wanders, Does Not Go Astray	II.	194
"No Man Could Pass Suddenly from Siberia to Senegal Without Losing Consciousness."—HUMBOLDT	III.	215
Fascination	IV.	220
We Think We Remember, We Forget	V.	231

BOOK VI—SOME VARIED ASPECTS OF URSUS

What the Misanthrope Said	I.	247
What He Does	II.	253
Complications	III.	275
Mœnibus Surdis Campana Muta	IV.	280
State Reasons Work in Small Things as Well as in Great	V.	290

THE NOVELS

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

OF

VICTOR HUGO

THE LAUGHING MAN

VOLUME IV

C. Delort. inv. L. Boisson. sc.

VICTOR HUGO

THE LAUGHING MAN

TRANSLATED BY

BELLINA PHILLIPS

VOLUME IV

PHILADELPHIA
GEORGE BARRIE & SON

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BOOK SEVEN

THE TITANESS

I.

AWAKENING

"And Dea!"

It seemed to Gwynplaine, watching the break of day at Corleone Lodge, during these occurrences at Tadcaster Inn, that this cry came from without; the cry was within him.

Who has not heard the deep clamors of the soul?

Besides day was dawning.

The dawn is a voice.

What would be the use of the sun, if it were not to awaken that dark sleeper, conscience?

Light and virtue belong to the same species.

Whether the god be called Christ or Love, there is always an hour when he is forgotten, even by the best; we all, even the saints, need a voice which makes us remember, and dawn makes the sublime warner speak within us. Conscience calls out before duty, as the cock crows before day.

That chaos, the human heart, hears the *Fiat lux*.

Gwynplaine—we will continue to call him so; Clancharlie is a lord, Gwynplaine is a man;—Gwynplaine was resuscitated.

It was time for the artery to be bound up.

His integrity was ebbing away.

"And Dea," said he.

And he felt something like a generous transfusion in his veins. Something wholesome and tumultuous poured itself into him. The violent breaking in of good thoughts, is like the return home of some one who has not his key, and who honestly climbs over his own wall. There is an escalade; but it is one of goodness. There is a breaking in; but it is upon evil.

"Dea! Dea! Dea!" he repeated.

He was strengthening his own heart to himself.

And he made this question aloud:

"Where art thou?"

And was almost surprised at not receiving a reply.

He continued, looking at the ceiling and the walls in a bewilderment wherein reason seemed returning:

"Where art thou? Where am I?"

And in this room, in this cage, he again began his captive wild beast's walk.

"Where am I? At Windsor. And thou? At Southwark! Oh! my God! this is the

first time that there is any distance between us. Who was it that dug it? I here, thou there! Oh! it cannot be. It shall not be. What have they done to me?"

He stopped.

"Who spoke to me of the Queen? How should I know who that is? Changed! I changed! Why? Because I am a lord. Do you know what is happening, Dea? You are a lady. It is astounding what things can happen! Come now, the question is to find my way again. Have I been lost here? A man spoke to me with an obscure manner. I remember the words he addressed to me: 'My Lord, a door which opens, closes another door. That which is behind you, no longer exists.' In other words: 'You are a coward!' That man, the wretch! he said that to me while I was not yet fully awake. He took advantage of my first moments of astonishment. I was like a prey he was holding. Where is he, so I can insult him! He spoke to me with the ominous smile of a dream. Ah! I am at last becoming myself again! It is well. They are mistaken if they think they can do as they please with Lord Clancharlie! Peer of England, yes, with a peeress, who is Dea. Conditions! As if I would accept any! The Queen? What do I care for the Queen? I have never seen her! I am not a lord, in

order to be a slave. I enter into power, free. Do they think they have unchained me for nothing? They have unmuzzled me, that is all. Dea! Ursus! we are together. What you were, I was. What I am, you are. Come! No, I am going to you. At once. At once! I have waited too long as it is. What must they think at not seeing me come back? That money! When I think that I sent them money! It was I who should have gone. I remember, that man told me that I could not get away from here. We shall see. Come, a carriage! a carriage! Let one be made ready. I want to go and fetch them. Where are the footmen? There must be footmen, since there is a lord. I am the master here. This is my house. And I will twist the bolts, and break the locks, and kick down the doors. Whoever bars my way, shall have my sword thrust through his body; for I have a sword now. I would like to see any one oppose me. I have a wife, Dea. I have a father, Ursus. My house is a palace, and I give it to Ursus. My name is a diadem, and I give it to Dea. Quick! Immediately! Dea, here I am! Ah! I shall step over the interval quickly, you'll see!"

And, raising the first portière he came to, he left the chamber impetuously.

He found himself in a corridor.

He went straight forward.

A second corridor presented itself.

All the doors were open.

He began to walk at random, from chamber to chamber, from passage to passage, looking for an outlet.

II.

THE RESEMBLANCE OF A PALACE TO A WOOD

In palaces built in the Italian style, and Corleone Lodge, was of this kind, there were very few doors. There were only curtains, portières and tapestries.

There was no palace, at that time, which had not in its interior, a singular maze of chambers and corridors, where luxury abounded; gildings, marbles, carved wood, Oriental silks; nooks full of precaution and darkness, others full of light. There were rich and gay attic-rooms, shining and polished closets faced with Dutch tiles or Portuguese blue-ware, high window embrasures sloped like roofs, and cabinets which were all glazed, making pretty habitable lanterns. The thickness of the walls was hollowed out and made into rooms. Here and there, were perfect bon-bon boxes, which were private wardrobes. These were called "the little apartments." It was there that crimes were committed.

If the Duke de Guise was to be killed, or the pretty wife of President Sylvecane was to be led astray, or later, if the cries of the young girls brought there by Lebel, were to be stifled, they were very convenient. They formed a complicated dwelling, which was unintelligible to every new-comer. A place for rape; an unknown depth, to which disappearances could be traced. Princes and lords deposited their booty in these elegant caverns; the Count de Charolais hid Madame Courchamp, the wife of the Clerk of the Council there; Monsieur de Monthulé hid the daughter of Haudry, the farmer of La Croix Saint Lenfroy there; the Prince de Conti hid the two beautiful baker's maids of l'Isle-Adam there; the Duke of Buckingham hid poor Pennywell there, etc. The things which were done there, were of the kind which are done, as the Roman law says, *vi, clam, et precario*, by force, secretly, and for a little while. Whoever was there, remained there during the good pleasure of the master. They were gilded secret dungeons. They partook of the cloister and the seraglio. Winding staircases led up and led down. A spiral of communicating rooms, brought you back to your starting point. A gallery ended in an oratory. A confessional was grafted on an alcove. The ramifications of coral growths,

and the hollowings in sponges, had probably served as models to the architects of the "royal and seignorial little apartments." The interbranchings were inextricable. Portraits pivoting upon openings, provided entrances and exits. It was like a stage setting. And it was very necessary; for dramas were enacted there. The stories of this beehive went from the cellar to the mansards. A queer madrepore incrusted in all palaces, beginning with Versailles, and which was the habitation of the Pygmies, in the dwelling of the Titans. Passages, resting-places, nests, pigeon-holes, hiding-places. All sorts of holes, where the meannesses of the great were thrust out of sight.

These walled and winding places awakened ideas of games, of bandaged eyes, of groping hands, of smothered laughter, blind-man's buff, hide-and-go-seek; and at the same time it made one think of the Atrides, of the Plantagenets, of the Médicis, of the savage knights of Elz, of Rizzio, of Monaldeschi, of swords pursuing a fugitive from chamber to chamber.

Antiquity, too, had mysterious dwellings of this kind, where luxury was put to the service of horrors. The pattern has been preserved, underground, in certain Egyptian sepulchres; for instance, in the crypt of King Psammetichus,

discovered by Passalacqua. One can find the horror of these suspected buildings in the old poets. *Error circumflexus, locus implicitus gyris.*

Gwynplaine was in the little apartments of Corleone Lodge.

He was in a fever to leave, to be out of doors, to see Dea again. This entanglement of corridors and cells, of hidden doors, of unexpected doors, stopped him and made his movements slow. He wanted to run, and he was forced to wander there. He thought he had but a door to push open, and he had a skein to disentangle.

After one chamber, came another. Then whole squares of saloons.

He met no living thing. He listened. Not a movement.

Sometimes he thought he was going over the same ground twice.

At times he thought he saw some one coming towards him. It was no one. It was himself, seen in a mirror, in his lordly garments.

It was he, but so perfectly improbable. He recognized himself, but not at once.

He kept on, taking every passage which presented itself.

He wandered into the labyrinths of private architecture; here, a coquettishly painted

and sculptured cabinet, which was somewhat obscene, yet very discreet; there, an equivocal chapel all inlaid with mother-of-pearl and enamels, with ivories carved for examination under a miscroscope, like snuff-box lids; there, one of those precious Florentine retreats, arranged for feminine hypochondria, and which were even then called, *boudoirs*. Everywhere on the ceilings, on the walls, on the very floors, there were velvety or metallic shapes of birds and trees; an extravagant vegetation entwined with pearls, reliefs of passementerie, sheets of jet, warriors, queens and female tritons cuirassed with hydra bodies. Bevelings of cut crystal, added prismatic effects to those of reflection. Glass imitated precious stones. Dark corners sparkled. One could not tell whether all those luminous facets, where emerald greens amalgamated with the gold of rising suns, and where pigeon-throat colored clouds floated, were microscopic mirrors or enormous sea weeds. It was a sort of magnificence which was at once delicate and enormous. It was the tiniest of palaces, unless it were the most colossal jewel box. A house for Mab or a jewel for Geo. Gwynplaine was looking for the outlet.

He could not find it. Impossible to find his way. Nothing is as heady as opulence, when it is seen for the first time. But it was a

labyrinth, besides. At each step some magnificence made an obstacle for him. It seemed to oppose his going away. It looked as if it did not want to let him loose. He seemed to be caught in the bird-lime of wonders. He felt himself seized and held.

"What a horrible palace!" thought he.

He prowled uneasily in this labyrinth asking himself what it all meant; whether he was in prison; then growing angry, and striving for free air. He repeated, Dea! Dea! just as one holds the thread that must not be allowed to break, and which will lead you out.

At times he called.

"Ho! some one!"

Nothing replied.

These chambers were endless. They were deserted, silent, splendid, ominous.

One imagines enchanted castles like this. Hidden heater-openings kept up a summer temperature in these corridors and cabinets. The month of June seemed to have been caught by some magician and shut up in this labyrinth. Now and then there was a sweet odor. He went through puffs of perfume, as if invisible flowers had been there. It was warm. There were carpets everywhere. One could have walked about naked.

Gwynplaine looked out of the windows. The view changed. Sometimes he saw

gardens filled with the freshness of Spring and morning, and then new façades with more statues, sometimes Spanish court-yards, which are little quadrangular courts between great buildings, paved, cold and mouldy; and then again a river, which was the Thames, and now a great tower, which was Windsor.

So early in the morning, there were no passers-by outside.

He stopped. He listened.

"Oh! I will go away," said he. "I will go back to Dea. They shall not keep me by force. Woe to him who would prevent me from going out! What is that great tower there? If there is a giant, a hell-hound or a Tarask, barring the door of this bewitched palace, I shall exterminate him. If an army, I will devour it. Dea! Dea!"

Suddenly he heard a slight, very feeble sound. It seemed like running water.

He was in a dark, narrow gallery, closed, a few steps in front of him, by a divided curtain.

He walked up to this curtain, drew it apart, entered.

He penetrated into something unexpected.

III.

EVE

What he had before his eyes was an octagonal hall, vaulted like a basket-handle, without windows, lighted from above, all faced, walls, floor and vaulting, with peach-blow marble ; in the middle of the hall a pinnacled baldaquin of pall-colored marble, with twisted columns, in the heavy and charming style of Elizabeth's time, covering a fountain-shaped bathing basin of the same black marble with its shadow ; in the centre of the basin, a fine jet of perfumed tepid water was softly and slowly filling the bath.

A black bath which was to change whiteness into splendor.

What he had heard was this water. An outlet arranged at a certain level in the bath, did not permit the water to overflow. The bath steamed, but so little, that there was hardly any moisture on the marble. The slender jet of water was like a supple rod of steel, bending at the least breath.

There was no furniture. Except, near the bath, one of those cushioned lounges, long enough for a woman, who lies stretched out on one, to have her dog or her lover at her feet; whence *can-al-pié* (Spanish for, *dog at foot*), of which we have made the word *canapé*.

It was a Spanish lounge, as the lower part was of silver. The cushions and the upholstery were of lustrous white silk.

On the other side of the bath, there stood, against the wall, a high toilet *étagère* of solid silver, with all its utensils, having eight little Venetian mirrors, adjusted in a silver sash-frame and representing a window, in the centre.

In that part of the wall-space nearest the lounge, a square bay had been cut; this resembled a little window, and was closed with a panel made of a sheet of red silver. This panel had hinges like a shutter. Upon the red silver there shone, inlaid and gilded, a royal crown. A gong was suspended and fastened to the wall above the panel, this gong was silver-gilt, unless it was of gold.

Opposite the entrance to this hall, facing Gwynplaine, who had stopped short, there was no marble wall space. It was replaced by an opening of the same dimensions, reaching to the vaulting and closed by a high and wide web of silver tissue.

This web, of fairy-like sheerness, was transparent. You could see through it.

In the centre of the web, at the spot where the spider is ordinarily found, Gwynplaine saw a formidable object, a naked woman.

Not literally naked. This woman was clothed. And clothed from head to foot. The garment was a chemise, a very long one, like the angels' robes in holy pictures, but so fine that it seemed wet. Hence a very nearly naked woman, more treacherous and more perilous than frank nudity. History has registered processions of princesses and great ladies between two rows of monks; where, under the pretext of bare feet and humility, the Duchess of Montpensier showed herself thus to the whole of Paris, in a lace chemise. As a corrective, she carried a wax taper in her hand.

The silver web, as transparent as a pane of glass, was a curtain. It was fixed at the top, only, and could be raised. It separated the marble hall, which was a bathing-room, from a chamber, which was a bed-chamber. This chamber was very small and a sort of mirror grotto. There were Venetian mirrors everywhere, adjoining each other, polyhedrically adjusted, joined by gilded rods, and all reflecting the bed which was in the centre. On this bed, which was of silver, like the

toilet table and the sofa, lay a woman. She slept.

She slept with her head thrown back, one of her feet thrusting back the coverlets, like the succubus above which dreams beat their wings.

Her guipure lace pillow had fallen down on the carpet.

There were two obstacles between her nudity and his gaze, her chemise and the silver gauze curtain, both transparencies. The room, more an alcove than a room, was lighted with some sort of reserve by the reflected light from the bath-room. The woman, perhaps, had no modesty, but the light had.

The bed had neither columns, nor dais, nor canopy, so that the woman when she opened her eyes could see herself naked a thousand times in the mirrors above her head.

The sheets showed the disorder of agitated sleep. The beauty of their folds indicated the fineness of the linen. It was the period when a queen, thinking she would be damned, imagined Hell thus: a bed with coarse sheets.

Moreover, the fashion of sleeping naked came from Italy, and dated back to the Romans. *Sub clara nuda lucerna*, says Horace. A singular silk dressing-gown, Chinese, no doubt, for in its folds a glimpse

of a great golden lizard could be caught, was thrown on the foot of the bed.

Beyond the bed, at the back of the alcove, there was probably a door, masked and marked by a somewhat large mirror on which peacocks and swans were painted. In this chamber all made of shadows, everything glistened. The spacings between the crystal and the gildings were covered with that sparkling matter which in Venice was called "glass gall."

At the head of the bed, there was a silver desk with movable brackets and fixed candlesticks, on which rested a book bearing at the head of its pages this title, in heavy red letters: *Alcoranus Mahumedis.*

Gwynplaine noticed none of these details. What he saw was the woman.

He was at once both petrified and bewildered; conditions that exclude each other, but, nevertheless, exist.

That woman,—he recognized her.

Her eyes were closed and her face turned towards him.

It was the Duchess.

She, that mysterious being in whom all the splendors of the unknown were mingled, the one who had made him dream so many unavowable dreams, the one who had written him so strange a letter! The only woman in

the world of whom he could say: "She has seen me, and she desires me!"

He had driven away the dreams, he had burned the letter. He had relegated her, as far as he could, out of his reveries and his memory; he no longer thought of her; he had forgotten her. . . .

He saw her again!

And she was terrible, thus seen.

A woman naked, is a woman armed.

He no longer breathed. He felt himself lifted, as in a cloud, and impelled forward. He looked. That woman before him? Was it possible?

At the theatre, a duchess. Here, a nereïd, a naïad, a fairy. Always an apparition.

He tried to flee, and felt that it could not be done. His gaze had become two chains and fastened him to that vision.

Was she a shameless girl? Was she a virgin? Both. Messaline, who perhaps was present and invisible, must have smiled, and Diana must have watched. The radiance of inaccessibility was upon all that beauty. There was no purity comparable to that chaste and high-born form. Certain snows that have never been touched are recognizable. That woman had the holy whiteness of the Jungfrau. That which streamed from that unconscious brow, from that loosened golden hair,

from those lowered eyelids, from those dimly visible blue veins, from the sculptural curves of the bosom, hips and knees which modelled the rosy touch of her chemise, was the divinity of an august slumber. The immodesty dissolved itself in radiance. This creature was naked, with as much calm as if she had a right to divine cynicism; she had the assurance of an Olympian, who knows herself to be the daughter of the abyss, and who can say to the Ocean: "Father!" and she presented herself, unapproachable and superb, to all who passed, to looks, to desires, to frenzies, to dreams, as proudly slumbering on the boudoir bed, as Venus in the immensity of foam.

She had gone to sleep at night and prolonged her sleep into broad daylight; with a confidence begun in darkness and continued in the light.

Gwynplaine quivered. He was admiring.

An unwholesome admiration, and one which interests too much.

He was afraid.

Fate's surprise box is never exhausted. Gwynplaine had thought he was at the end. He was beginning again. What were all these thunderbolts, crashing down upon his head without intermission, and finally, this culminating stroke, which threw a sleeping goddess at him, a quivering man? What

were all these successive openings of heaven, whence finally, his dreams came in this desirable and dangerous way? What were all these favors of the unknown tempter, bringing him his vague aspirations, his confused whims, even his bad thoughts, in the living flesh, one after the other, and overwhelming him under an intoxicating series of realities drawn from impossibilities! Was there a conspiracy of the realms of darkness against him, poor wretch, and what was to become of him, with all these smiles of ominous fortune about him? What was all this madness, which seemed expressly arranged? This woman! Here! Why? How? No explanation. Why he? Why she? Was he made peer of England expressly for that duchess? Who led them to one another thus? Who was the dupe? Who was the victim? Whose good faith was being abused? Was God being deceived? He did not clearly define these things, he dimly saw them through a flight of black clouds in his brain. This magical and malevolent dwelling, this strange palace, as tenacious as a prison, was it in the plot, too? Gwynplaine was experiencing a sort of resorption. Obscure powers were mysteriously garrotting him. Gravitation enchained him. His will, slowly ebbing away, was leaving him. What could he hold on to? He was both

wild and fascinated. This time, he felt that he was irremediably insane. The dark headlong fall into the dazzling precipice was still going on.

The woman was sleeping.

To him, the state of his bewildering commotion becoming more aggravated, she was no longer even the duchess, or the lady; she was the woman.

Deviations exist in man in a latent state. Vices have an invisible tracing all ready and prepared, in our organization. Even when innocent, and, in appearance, pure, we have that within us. To be without stain, is not to be without defects. Love is a law. Voluptuousness is a snare. There is intoxication, and there is drunkenness. To desire a woman, is intoxication: to desire any woman, is drunkenness.

Gwynplaine, beside himself, trembled.

What was to be done against this encounter? No waves of stuffs here, no silken amplitudes, no prolix and coquettish toilet, no voluptuous exaggeration hiding and exposing, no cloud. Only nakedness in its fearful conciseness. A sort of mysterious and impudently Edenic summons. All the dark side of man compelled to appear. An Eve worse than Satan. The human and the superhuman, amalgamated. A disquieting ecstasy, ending

in the brutal triumph of instinct over duty. The sovereign outline of beauty is imperious. When it leaves the ideal, and when it deigns to be real, it is a fatal proximity for man.

At times, the Duchess moved softly on the bed, and had the vague movements of vapor in the sky; changing her attitude as the cloud changes its shape. She undulated, forming and decomposing charming curves. Woman has all the suppleness of water. Like water, the Duchess had something strangely intangible about her. Strange to say, she was there, as visible flesh, and she remained chimerical. Palpable, she yet seemed distant. Gwynplaine, pale and affrighted, gazed. He listened to that bosom palpitate, and thought he heard a phantom breathing. He was attracted, he struggled. What could he do against her? What could he do against himself?

He had expected everything, except that. A fierce guardian before a door, some furious and monstrous jailer to fight against, that is what he had counted on. He had foreseen Cerberus; he found Hebe.

A naked woman. A sleeping woman.

What a mysterious struggle.

He closed his eyes. Too much light in one's eyes causes pain. But through his closed lids, he saw her again, at once. Darker; but just as beautiful.

To take flight, is not easy. He had tried, and had not been able. He was rooted to the spot, as one is, in dreams. When we want to go back, temptation nails our feet to the ground. It is still possible to go forward, not to go back. The invisible arms of sin rise from the ground, and drag us on to the incline. A platitude accepted by everyone, is to the effect, that emotion becomes blunted. Nothing is more false. It is just as if one said, that under nitric acid, falling drop by drop, a wound appeased and grew calmer; and that Damiens grows indifferent to being torn to pieces by horses.

The truth is, that at each renewal, the sensation is more acute.

From surprise to surprise, Gwynplaine had come to a paroxysm. Under this new stupor, that vase, his brain, was brimming over. He felt a frightful awakening.

He no longer had a compass. A single certainty was before him—that woman. Some strange irremediable happiness was disclosing itself, which resembled shipwreck. No choice of course was open to him. There was only the irresistible current and the reef. The reef is not the rock, it is the siren. There is a magnet at the bottom of the abyss. Gwynplaine wished to tear himself from this attraction, but how could he? He no longer felt

any point of support. Human fluctuation is infinite. A man can be disabled, like a ship. Conscience is an anchor, and, sad fact, conscience can break.

He had not even this resource: "I am disfigured and terrible. She will repulse me." This woman had written him that she loved him.

In every crisis, there is a moment when we lose our balance. When we lean over towards evil, more than towards the good, that quantity of ourselves which is hanging over sin, ends by winning, and throws us over. Had this sad moment come for Gwynplaine?

How could he escape?

So it was she! The Duchess! that woman! He had her before him in this room, in this deserted place, asleep, given up to him, alone. She was at his mercy, and he was in her power!

The Duchess!

You have perceived a star in the depth of space. You have admired it. It is so far off! what can be feared from a fixed star? One day—one night—you see it change its place. You notice a shivering light around it. That star, which you thought impassive, moves. It is not a star, it is a comet. It is the immense incendiary of the sky. The star advances,

grows, shakes out its crimson tresses, becomes enormous. It is moving towards you. Oh, terror, it is coming to you! The comet knows you, the comet desires you, the comet wants you. Frightful celestial advances! That which is coming upon you, is the excess of light, which is blindness; is the excess of life, which is death. You refuse the advances made you by the zenith. You reject the proffered love of the yawning abyss. You put your hands over your eyes, you hide yourself, you steal away, you think yourself saved. You open your eyes once more. The dreadful star is there. It is no longer a star, it is a world. An unknown world. A world of lava and flame. Devouring wonder of the depths. It fills the sky. It is the only thing there. The starry gem of the depths of infinite space, a diamond at a distance, is a furnace when near. You are in its flame.

And you feel your burning begin with a warmth of paradise.

IV.

SATAN

Suddenly the sleeper awoke. She sat up with an abrupt and harmonious majesty; her hair of blonde floss silk fell in a soft tumult over her hips; her drooping chemise showed her shoulder very far down; she touched her pink toe with her delicate hand, and looked for a few moments, at her naked foot, which was worthy to be adored by Pericles and copied by Phidias; then she stretched and yawned like a tigress at sunrise.

It is probable that Gwynplaine breathed with effort, as when one is holding one's breath.

"Is any one there?" said she.

She said that while she yawned, and it was full of grace.

Gwynplaine heard that voice which he did not know yet. The voice of a charmer; a deliciously haughty accent; the caressing intonation tempering the habit of command.

At the same time, rising on her knees, there

is an ancient statue, kneeling thus in a thousand transparent folds, she drew the dressing-gown towards her, and sprang from the bed, naked and erect, just as long as it takes an arrow to pass, and then she was covered. In the twinkling of an eye, the silk enveloped her. The very long sleeves hid her hands. Nothing but the tips of her white toes with their little nails, like those of a child's foot, could be seen.

She drew her rippling hair off her back and threw it over her gown, then she ran behind the bed, to the back of the alcove, and put her ear against the painted mirror, which probably hid a door.

She knocked against the mirror with the little elbow that the bent forefinger makes.

"Is any one there? Lord David, can it be you already? What o'clock can it be? Is it you, Barkilphedro?"

She turned around.

"No, not there. It is not on this side. Is there any one in the bathing-room? Why don't you answer? Indeed, it cannot be; no one can come that way."

She went to the silver cloth curtain, opened it with the tip of her foot, thrust it aside with her shoulder, and entered the marble chamber.

Gwynplaine felt something like the chill of death. There was no refuge. It was too late

to fly. Besides, he had not the strength for it. He would have wished the pavement to yawn, and let him fall beneath it. No means of not being seen.

She saw him.

She looked at him, prodigiously astounded, but without any start, and with a shade of content and contempt.

"What! Gwynplaine!" she said.

Then, suddenly, with a violent bound, for this cat was a panther, she threw her arms around his neck.

She pressed his head in her bare arms, for in this violence, her sleeves had dropped away from them.

And, all at once pushing him back and letting her little hands down like claws, on both Gwynplaine's shoulders, she standing before him, he standing before her, she began to look at him strangely.

She looked at him, fatefully, with her Aldebaran eyes, and their mixed visual ray, which had something strangely suspicious and sidereal in it. Gwynplaine gazed at her blue eye and her black eye, distracted by the double fixedness of that heavenly, and that infernal look. This man and woman cast an ominous dazzling influence over one another. They fascinated each other; he by deformity, she by beauty, both by horror.

He was silent under a weight it was impossible for him to lift. She exclaimed:

"You are clever. You have come. You knew that I was obliged to leave London. You have followed me. That was well done. You are an extraordinary man to be here."

A reciprocal taking possession, throws out a sort of lightning. Gwynplaine confusedly warned by a vague, wild and decent fear, fell back a step, but the rosy nails clutching his shoulders held him. Something inexorable was impending. He was in the wild woman's den, a wild man himself.

She resumed:

"Anne, that stupid thing—you know! The Queen—she made me come to Windsor without knowing why. When I arrived, she was closeted with her idiot of a chancellor. But how did you manage to get to me? This is what I call being a man. Obstacles! There are none. You are called, and you hasten to come. Did you make inquiries? My name, the Duchess Josiana, I think you knew it. Who brought you in? It was the page, no doubt. He is intelligent. I will give him a hundred guineas. How did you set about it? Tell me that. No, do not tell me. I do not want to know it. To explain, belittles. I like you better when you are surprising. You are monstrous enough to be

marvellous. You fall from the Empyrean, that is it, or you come up from the lowest depths, through the trap-door of Erebus. Nothing could be simpler, the ceiling parted or the flooring opened. A descent from the clouds; or an ascent in flaming sulphur, that is how you came. You deserve to enter like the gods. It is settled, you are my lover."

Gwynplaine, bewildered, listened, feeling his thoughts oscillate more and more. It was all over. He could no longer doubt. This woman confirmed the letter of the previous night. He, Gwynplaine, the lover of a duchess, the beloved lover! Immense pride with its thousand dark heads began to stir in this unfortunate heart.

Vanity—an enormous power within us, against us.

The Duchess continued:

"Since you are here, it must be because it is so determined. I ask no more. There is some one above, or below, who throws us to each other. Betrothal of the Styx and Aurora. Unbridled betrothal, outside of all laws! The day I saw you, I said: 'It is he. I recognize him. He is the monster of my dreams. He shall be mine.'—Fate must be assisted. That is why I wrote to you. One question, Gwynplaine. Do you believe in predestination? I believe in it, indeed, since I read Scipio's

Dream in Cicero. Just see, I did not notice. A nobleman's dress. You have dressed like a lord. Why not? You are a mountebank. All the more reason. A juggler is worth a lord. Besides, what are the lords? Clowns. You have a noble figure, you are very well made. It is perfectly unheard-of that you should be here! When did you come? How long have you been here? Did you see me naked? I am beautiful, am I not? I was going to take my bath. Oh! I love thee. Did you read my letter? Did you read it yourself? Did they read it to you? Do you know how to read? You must be ignorant. I ask you questions, but do not answer. I do not like the tone of your voice. It is soft. An incomparable creature like you, should not speak, but snarl. You sing, that is harmonious. I hate that. It is the only thing about you that displeases me. All the rest is formidable, all the rest is superb. In India you would be a god. Were you born with that frightful laugh upon your face? No, surely not. No doubt it is a penal mutilation. I certainly hope that you have committed some crime. Come to my arms."

She let herself drop on the lounge, and made him fall near her. They found themselves close to each other, without knowing how. What she had said, passed over Gwynplaine

like a great gust of wind. He hardly seized the meaning of this whirlwind of wild words. There was admiration in her eyes. She spoke tumultuously, frantically, with a passionate and tender voice. Her words were music, but to Gwynplaine, the music was like a tempest.

Again she rested her fixed look upon him.

"I feel degraded near you; what joy! How insipid it is to be a 'Highness!' I am august,—there is nothing more wearisome. Abasement is restful. I am so saturated with respect, that I need contempt. We are all just a little extravagant in our tastes, beginning with Venus, Cleopatra, Mesdames de Chevreuse and de Longueville, and winding up with me. I will make this public, I declare I will. This is a love-affair, which will give a blow to the royal Stuart family to which I belong. Ah! I breathe! I have found the outlet. I am outside of majesty. To be unclassed is to be freed. To break everything, to dare everything, to do everything, to undo everything, is to live! Listen, I love thee."

She broke off and smiled fearfully.

"I love you not only because you are disfigured, but because you are vile. I love the monster, and I love the actor. A humiliated, hooted, grotesque, hideous lover, exposed to laughter on that pillory which is called a

theatre, has an extraordinary savor. It is biting into the fruit of the abyss. A lover who makes one infamous, is exquisite. What tempts me, is to have, not the apple of paradise, but the apple of hell, at my lips. I have that hunger and thirst, I am that Eve. The Eve of the pit. You are probably a demon without knowing it. I have kept myself until now, for a nightmare face. You are a puppet whose strings are worked by a spectre. You are a vision of the great infernal laugh. You are the master I was awaiting. I wanted an amour, such as Medeas and Canidias have. I was sure, that one of those immense night adventures, would happen to me. You are what I wanted. I am telling you a lot of things that you surely do not understand. Gwynplaine, no one has possessed me, I give myself to you as pure as an ardent flame. You evidently do not believe me, but if you only knew how little I care about that!"

Her words had the pell-mell of an eruption. A puncture in the flanks of Etna might give an idea of this burst of flame.

Gwynplaine stammered:

"Madame . . ."

She put her hand over his mouth.

"Silence! I am gazing at you. Gwynplaine, I am the frenzied, immaculate one. I am a bacchantic vestal. No man has known

me; and I could be Pythia at Delphos, and have the brazen tripod under my naked heel, on which the priests, leaning on the Python's skin, whisper questions to the invisible god. My heart is of stone, but it resembles those mysterious pebbles which the sea rolls to the foot of Huntly Nabb Rock, at the mouth of the Thees, and, in which, when they are broken, a serpent is found. That serpent is my love. An all-powerful love, for it made you come. There was an impossible distance between us. I was in Sirius and you were in Allioth. You made the measureless trip, and you are here. It is well. Be silent. Take me."

She stopped. He shivered. She smiled again.

"Look you, Gwynplaine, to dream is to create. A wish is a call. To construct a chimera, is to provoke a reality. All-powerful and terrible darkness, does not allow us to defy her. She satisfies us. You are here. Will I dare to lose myself? Yes. Will I dare to be your mistress, your concubine, your slave, your thing? With joy. Gwynplaine, I am Woman. A woman, is clay that desires to be mire. I need to despise myself. That seasons pride. Baseness is the alloy of grandeur! Nothing combines better. Despise me, you, whom everyone despises. To be

degraded beneath degradation, what delight! I cull the double flower of ignominy! Trample me under your feet. You will only love me the better for it. I know it positively. Do you know why I idolize you? Because I despise you. You are so far beneath me, that I raise you upon an altar. To mingle the high and low, is to make chaos; and chaos pleases me. All begins and ends in chaos. What is chaos? An immense impurity. And with that impurity God made light, and of that sewer, God made the world. You do not know how perverse I am. Knead a star in the mud, and that will be me."

Thus spoke this fearful woman, showing her nude virgin body through her opened robe.

She went on:

"A wolf for all others, I will be a dog for you. How astonished they will be! The astonishment of idiots is sweet. I understand myself. Am I a goddess? Amphitrite gave herself to the Cyclops. *Fluctivoma Amphitrite.* Am I a fairy? Urgela gave herself up to Brugryx, the winged man with eight webbed hands. Am I a princess? Maria Stuart had Rizzio. Three beauties, three monsters. I am greater than they, for you are worse than all of them. Gwynplaine, we are made for one another. The monster that you are externally, I am, internally. Hence, my love.

A caprice?—It may be. What is a hurricane? A caprice. There is a sidereal affinity between us: both of us belong to darkness, you by your face, I, by my mind. In your turn, you create me. You come, and my soul comes forth. I did not know it. It surprised me. Your approach, makes the hydra within me come forth from me, a goddess. You reveal my true nature to me. You make me make the discovery of myself. See how I resemble you. Look in me as in a mirror. Your face is my soul. I did not know that I was so terrible. I, too, then, am a monster! Oh, Gwynplaine, you drive all ennui away."

She laughed a strange, childish laugh; came close to his ear and said quite low:

"Do you want to see a crazy woman! Look at me."

Her look penetrated Gwynplaine. A look is a philter. Her robe was in dangerous disorder. Blind and bestial ecstasy was invading Gwynplaine. An ecstasy in which there was agony.

While this woman was speaking, he felt as if he were being splashed with fire. He felt that something irreparable would occur. He had not the strength to say a word. She interrupted herself, and gazed at him:

"Oh, monster!" she murmured. She was wild.

Suddenly, she seized his hands.

"Gwynplaine, I represent the throne, you, the mountebank's platform. Let us place ourselves on a level. Ah! I am happy, I have fallen. I wish the whole world could know how abject I am. It would only bow the lower before me; for the more they abhor, the more they creep. The human race is so constituted. Hostile, but reptile. A dragon, yet a worm. Oh! I am depraved as the gods were. No one can take the fact away from me that I am a king's bastard. I act like a queen. Who was Rhodope? A queen who loved Phtèh, the man with the crocodile's head. She built the third pyramid in his honor. Penthesilea, loved the centaur, called the Sagittary, and who is a constellation. And what do you say to Anne of Austria? Was Mazarin not ugly enough? You are not ugly, you are disfigured. Ugliness is little, deformity is great. Ugliness is the devil's grimace behind beauty. Deformity is the reverse of sublimity. It is the other side. Olympus has two slopes; the one towards light, gives us Apollo, the other towards darkness, gives us Polyphemus. You, you are a Titan. You would be Behemoth, in the forest, Leviathan, in the ocean, Typhon, in the cloaca. You are superior to all. There is lightning in your deformity. Your face has

been destroyed by a thunderbolt. What is upon your face, is the angry twist of the great flaming hand. It kneaded you and passed on. Vast obscure wrath, in an attack of rage, fastened your soul under that frightful superhuman face. Hell is a penal furnace, where the red iron, called Fatality, is heated, and you are marked with that iron. To love you is to understand greatness. I have that triumph. To be in love with Apollo—that would be a great thing, indeed! Glory is measured by the wonder it causes. I love thee. I dreamt of thee for nights and nights, and nights! This is a palace belonging to me. You shall see my gardens. There are streams under leaves, grottoes where we can embrace, and very beautiful marble groups, made by Chevalier Bernini. And flowers! There are too many of them. In Spring there is a perfect conflagration of roses. Did I tell you that the Queen is my sister? Do with me what you like. I am made for Jupiter to kiss my feet, and for Satan to spit in my face. Have you a religion? I am a papist. My father, James II., died in France, with a lot of Jesuits around him. I have never felt the sensation I have near you. Oh! I should like to be with you in the evening, hearing strains of music, both leaning against the same cushion, under the crimson awning of a golden galley, in the midst of the

infinite tenderness of the sea. Insult me. Beat me. Pay me. Treat me like an abject creature. I adore thee."

Caresses can roar. Do you doubt it? Go in a lion's den. There was horror in that woman, and it combined with her grace. Nothing could be more tragic. You felt the claw, and felt the velvet too. It was a feline attack, mingled with retreat. There was both play and murder, in this come and go. She idolized him insolently. The result was a communicated frenzy. A fatal language, at once inexpressibly sweet and violent. That which was insulting, did not insult. That which expressed adoration, outraged. That which slapped, deified. Her tone impressed an indescribable Promethean grandeur upon her furious and passionate words. The feasts of the Great Goddess sung by Æschylus, gave the women seeking satyrs under the starlight, this dark, epic rage. These paroxysms formed a part of the mystic dances under the branching trees of Dodona. This woman seemed transfigured, if transfiguration be possible on the side opposed to heaven. Her hair quivered like a mane; her robe closed and unclosed; nothing could be more fascinating than that bosom full of savage cries, the beams of her blue eye, mingled with the flames of her black eye; she was supernatural.

Gwynplaine weakening, felt himself conquered by the powerful penetration of such advances.

"I love thee!" she cried.

And she bit him with a kiss.

Homer has clouds, which perhaps were about to be as necessary for Gwynplaine and Josiana, as for Jupiter and Juno. For Gwynplaine to be beloved by a woman who had eyes, and who saw him; to have the pressure of divine lips upon his shapeless mouth; was exquisite and overpowering. He felt everything within him fade away before this woman full of enigmas. The remembrance of Dea, struggled in that darkness, with faint cries. There is an ancient bas-relief, which represents a sphinx devouring a cupid; the wings of the gentle, celestial creature are bleeding between those ferocious and smiling jaws.

Did Gwynplaine love this woman? Has man two poles like the globe? Are we a whirling sphere, on our inflexible axis; a star when afar, mire when near, where day and night alternate? Has the heart two sides; one loving towards the light, the other loving in realms of darkness? In the one, loving the radiant woman of light, in the other, the impure woman. Angels are a necessity. Can it be possible that the devil is a necessity

too? Are there bat's wings for the soul? Does the twilight hour sound fatally for all? Does sin form an integral part of the destiny we cannot refuse? Must the evil in our nature, be taken as a whole, with the rest? Is sin a debt we have to pay? Deep shudderings.

And, nevertheless, a voice tells us that it is a crime to be weak. What Gwynplaine was experiencing was unspeakable: the flesh, life, fright, voluptuousness, an overpowering intoxication, and all the measure of shame that there is in pride. Was he about to fall?

She repeated: "I love thee!"

And she clasped him to her breast in a frenzy.

Gwynplaine was gasping.

Suddenly, a delicate sound vibrated clearly and firmly, quite near them. It was the bell fastened to the wall, which was ringing. The Duchess turned her head, and said:

"What does she want of me?" And suddenly, the silver panel encrusted with the royal crown opened with the sound of a spring trap.

The interior of a tower, lined with royal blue velvet appeared, with a letter on a golden plate.

This letter was voluminous and square, and placed so as to show the seal, which was a

great impression on red wax. The bell continued ringing.

The open panel almost touched the lounge where they were both seated. The Duchess leaning over, and steadying herself by her arm around Gwynplaine's neck, extended her other arm, took the letter from the plate and pushed back the panel. The tower closed, and the ringing stopped.

The Duchess broke the wax in her fingers; opened the envelope, took out the two folded papers it contained, and threw the envelope on the floor at Gwynplaine's feet.

The broken wax seal, remained decipherable, and upon it, Gwynplaine could make out a royal crown, with the letter A beneath it.

The torn envelope spread out both its sides, so that one could read the superscription : *To Her Grace the Duchess Josiana.*

The two folded missives which the envelope had contained, were a parchment, and a vellum. The parchment was large, the vellum, small. Upon the parchment, a large Chancery seal was impressed, in that green wax, which is called lord's sealing-wax. The Duchess all palpitating, and with her eyes swimming in ecstasy, made an imperceptible pout of annoyance.

"Ah !" said she, " what does she send me

here? A lot of papers! What a kill-joy that woman is!"

And leaving the parchment aside, she partly opened the vellum.

"It is in her writing. It is in my sister's writing. It tires me, Gwynplaine. I asked you whether you knew how to read? Do you read?"

Gwynplaine replied in the affirmative, with a nod.

She stretched herself out on the lounge, almost like a woman in bed, carefully hid her feet under her dress, and her arms under her sleeves, with an odd modesty, while she left her bosom exposed; and enveloping Gwynplaine in a passionate look, she handed him the vellum.

"Well, Gwynplaine, you belong to me. Begin your services. My dearly beloved, read me what the Queen writes me."

Gwynplaine took the vellum, unfolded it, and, with a voice, in which there were all sorts of tremblings, he read:

"Madam,

"We herewith graciously send you the copy of a report, certified and signed by our servant, William Cowper, Lord-Chancellor of this Kingdom of England, and where this important fact is shown, namely, that the legitimate son of Lord Linnæus Clancharlie

has been found, and identified, under the name of *Gwynplaine*, in the baseness of wandering and vagabond life, among mountebanks and jugglers. The suppression of his condition goes back to his earliest years. In consequence of the laws of the kingdom, and in virtue of his hereditary right, Lord Fermain Clancharlie, son of Lord Linnæus, will be this very day, admitted and re-instated in the House of Lords. Therefore, wishing to treat you well, and preserve the transmission of the possessions and domains of the Lords Clancharlie Hunkerville to you, we substitute him for Lord David Dirry-Moir in your good graces. We have had Lord Fermain brought to your residence of Corleone Lodge; we command and wish, as Queen and sister, that our said Lord Fermain Clancharlie, named up to this day, Gwynplaine, be your husband, and that you shall marry him, and such is our royal pleasure."

While Gwynplaine was reading, with tones that shook at almost every word, the Duchess, now raised from the cushion of the lounge, listened with staring eyes. As Gwynplaine ended, she snatched the letter from him.

"ANNE, QUEEN," said she, reading the signature in a tone of reverie.

Then she picked up the parchment she had thrown on the ground, and looked it over. It

was the declaration of the shipwrecked men of the *Matutina*, copied from a report signed by the Sheriff of Southwark and the Lord-Chancellor.

When she had read the report, she read the Queen's message over again. Then she said: "So be it."

And, calmly pointing to the portière of the gallery, by which he had entered:

"Go out," said she, to Gwynplaine.

Gwynplaine, petrified, remained motionless.

She resumed icily:

"Since you are my husband, go out."

Gwynplaine, speechless, with eyes lowered like a culprit, did not stir.

She added:

"You have not the right to be here. This is my lover's place."

Gwynplaine was like a man nailed to the spot.

"Well," said she. "I will be the one; I am going away. Ah! you are my husband! Nothing more than that! I hate you."

Rising and throwing a haughty gesture of farewell to some one in space, she went out.

The gallery portière closed upon her.

V.

THEY RECOGNIZE, BUT THEY DO NOT KNOW EACH OTHER

Gwynplaine remained alone.

Alone, in presence of that warm bath, and that disordered bed.

The pulverization of his ideas was at its height. What he was thinking, no longer resembled thought. It was a diffusion, a dispersion, the anguish of being in all that was incomprehensible. There was something within him, like the wild rush for escape in a dream.

Entrance into unknown worlds is not a simple thing.

Starting with the Duchess' letter brought by the page, a series of surprising hours had begun for Gwynplaine, which had become less and less intelligible. Up to this instant he had been in a dream, but he could see clearly. Now he was groping.

He no longer thought. He did not even reflect. He was just enduring.

He remained seated on the lounge, at the place where the Duchess had left him.

All at once, there was a sound of steps in the gloom. It was a man's step. This step came from the side opposite the gallery, by which the Duchess had left. It came nearer, and could be heard softly, but clearly. Gwynplaine, however great his absorption, listened.

Suddenly, beyond the curtain of silver web, that the Duchess had left partly open, behind the bed, a door, which it was easy to suspect under the painted mirror, opened wide, and a gay and manly voice, singing as loud as it could, threw this refrain of an old French song into the mirror-chamber :

> "Three little pigs on their own dung-hill
> Were swearing like sedan-chair porters."

A man came in.

This man had a sword at his side, and a hat with feathers, cords, and a cockade on it, in his hand, and was dressed in a magnificent galooned navy uniform.

Gwynplaine rose to his feet, as if a spring had sent him up.

He recognized the man, and the man recognized him.

This double exclamation escaped from both stupefied mouths :

"Gwynplaine !"

"Tom-Jim-Jack !"

The man with the plumed hat walked up to Gwynplaine, who folded his arms.

"How do you come to be here, Gwynplaine?"

"And you, Tom-Jim-Jack, how do you come here?"

"Ah! I understand. Josiana! A caprice. A mountebank, who is a monster, is too fine to be resisted. You disguised yourself to come here, Gwynplaine."

"And so did you, Tom-Jim-Jack."

"Gwynplaine, what does this nobleman's coat signify?"

"Tom-Jim-Jack, what does this officer's coat signify?"

"Gwynplaine, I do not answer questions."

"Nor I, Tom-Jim-Jack."

"Gwynplaine, my name is not Tom-Jim-Jack."

"Tom-Jim-Jack, my name is not Gwynplaine."

"Gwynplaine, I am at home here."

"I am at home here, Tom-Jim-Jack."

"I forbid you to echo me. You may have irony, but I have my cane. A truce to your parodies, you contemptible fellow."

Gwynplaine turned pale.

"Fellow, yourself! And you shall give me satisfaction for this insult."

"In your booth, as much as you please. With my fists."

"Here, and with a sword."

"Friend Gwynplaine, the sword is a nobleman's affair. I fight with my equals, only. We are equals with our fists, not equals before the sword. At Tadcaster Inn, Tom-Jim-Jack can box Gwynplaine. At Windsor, it is different. Know this. I am a rear-admiral."

"And I, I am a peer of England."

The man in whom Gwynplaine thought he saw Tom-Jim-Jack, burst out laughing.

"Why not king? Indeed, you are right. A player is all he represents. Tell me that you are Theseus, Duke of Athens."

"I am a peer of England, and we shall fight."

"Gwynplaine, this is getting to be tedious. Do not play with a man who can have you whipped. My name is Lord David Dirry-Moir."

"And I, I am called Lord Clancharlie."

Lord David burst into a second laugh.

"Well done! Gwynplaine is Lord Clancharlie. That is, indeed, the name one must have to possess Josiana. Listen, I forgive you. And do you know why? It is because we are the two lovers."

The portière of the gallery was drawn aside, and a voice said:

"You are the two husbands, my lords."

Both turned around.

"Barkilphedro!" exclaimed Lord David.

It was Barkilphedro, indeed.

He bowed profoundly to the two lords, with a smile.

A few steps behind him, a gentleman with a severe and respectful face, holding a black rod in his hand, was to be seen.

The gentleman advanced, bowed three times to Gwynplaine, and said to him:

"My Lord, I am the Usher of the Black Rod. I come to fetch your Lordship, according to Her Majesty's orders."

BOOK EIGHT

THE CAPITOL AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

I.

DISSECTION OF MAJESTIC THINGS

The dangerous ascent, which, for so many hours had been varying its dazzling effects upon Gwynplaine, and which had carried him off to Windsor, now carried him back to London.

The visionary realities succeeded each other, in procession, without any break of continuity.

There was no means of getting away from them. When one left him, the next seized him.

He had not time to breathe.

Whoever has seen a juggler, has seen fate. Those projectiles falling, rising, and falling again, are men in the hand of destiny.

Projectiles and toys.

The evening of that same day, Gwynplaine was in an extraordinary place.

He was seated on a bench covered with fleurs-de-lys. Over his silk garments he had a robe of scarlet velvet lined with white taffetas silk, and an ermine cape; and on

his shoulders, two bands of ermine edged with gold.

Around him there were men of all ages, young and old, seated like himself, on fleurs-de-lys; and like him, clothed in ermine and crimson.

Before him, he saw other men, on their knees. These men wore black silk gowns. Some of these kneeling men were writing.

Opposite him, at a little distance, he saw some steps, a platform, a dais, a wide sparkling shield between a lion and a unicorn; and, under the dais, upon the platform, at the top of the steps, backed against the shield, a gilt and crowned arm-chair. It was a throne.

The throne of Great Britain.

Gwynplaine, a peer himself, was in the House of the Peers of England.

In what way had this introduction of Gwynplaine into the House of Lords taken place? Let us relate it.

All the day, from morning until evening, from Windsor up to London, from Corleone Lodge up to Westminster Hall, had been an ascent from round to round. At each round he had a new sense of giddiness.

He had been taken away from Windsor in one of the Queen's coaches, with the escort due to a peer. The guard which honors, much resembles the guard which guards.

That day the dwellers along the road from Windsor to London saw a cavalcade of Her Majesty's gentlemen-pensioners gallop by, accompanying two coaches driven at full speed, as a royal post. In the first, there was the Usher of the Black Rod, his rod in his hand. In the second, one could distinguish a broad hat with white plumes, shading a face which could not be seen. Who was going by there? Was it a prince? Was it a prisoner?

It was Gwynplaine.

It looked much as if some one were being taken to the Tower of London, unless it was some one being taken to the House of Lords.

The Queen had done things well. As it concerned her sister's future husband, she had sent an escort from her own household.

The deputy of the Usher of the Black Rod, was on horseback at the head of the escort.

In the Usher of the Black Rod's chaise, there was a cushion of silver cloth upon the front seat. Upon this cushion was placed a black portfolio marked with a royal crown.

At Brentford, the last relay before London, the two chaises and the escort halted.

A tortoise-shell coach, drawn by four horses, was waiting, with four footmen behind, two postillions in front, and a coachman in a wig.

Everything about this coach, wheels, steps, braces, pole, all the appurtenances were gilt. The horses had silver harness.

This gala coach was of a grand and astounding design, and would have figured magnificently among the fifty celebrated coaches, of which Roubo has left us the pictures.

The Usher of the Black Rod alighted, and so did his officer.

The Usher's deputy removed the silver cloth cushion, on which the portfolio with the crown lay, from the front seat of the post-chaise, laid it on his two hands, and stood behind the Usher.

The Usher of the Black Rod opened the door of the coach, which was empty; then the door of the chaise in which Gwynplaine sat; and lowering his eyes respectfully, requested Gwynplaine to be seated in the coach.

Gwynplaine alighted from the chaise and entered the coach.

The Usher bearing the rod, and the officer bearing the cushion, entered after him, and occupied the low bench intended for pages in ceremonial coaches.

The interior of the coach was hung with white satin, trimmed with silver lace and silver points and tassels. The ceiling showed a coat-of-arms.

The postillions of the two chaises they had just left wore the royal livery. The coachman, the postillions, and the footmen of the carriage they entered, wore another, very magnificent livery.

Though in a state of somnambulism, in which he was, as it were, annihilated, Gwynplaine noticed this sumptuous retinue, and asked the Usher of the Black Rod:

"What livery is that?"

The Usher of the Black Rod replied: "Yours, my Lord."

That day, the House of Lords was to have an evening session. *Curia erat serena*, as the old records say. In England, parliamentary life is willingly made nocturnal life. We know that it once happened to Sheridan, to begin a speech at midnight and to finish it at sunrise.

The two post-chaises returned to Windsor empty; the coach containing Gwynplaine went towards London.

The tortoise-shell coach with its four horses, went from Brentford to London at a walk. The dignity of the coachman's wig demanded this.

Ceremony took possession of Gwynplaine under the form of this solemn coachman.

Moreover, these delays were, according to all appearances, calculated. The probable motive will be seen further on.

It was not yet night, but it was not far from it, when the tortoise-shell coach stopped before King's Gate, a heavy, low, arched door, between two turrets, which connected White Hall with Westminster.

The cavalcade of gentlemen-pensioners made a group around the coach.

One of the footmen from behind jumped to the pavement, and opened the carriage-door.

The Usher of the Black Rod, followed by his deputy bearing the cushion, alighted from the coach, and said to Gwynplaine:

"My Lord, deign to alight. Will your Lordship be pleased to keep on your hat."

Under his traveling cloak, Gwynplaine wore the silk suit, which he had not taken off since the previous day. He had no sword.

He left his cloak in the coach.

Under the carriage vaulting of King's Gate, there was a little door, raised a few steps from the ground.

In ceremonial matters, respect is shown by preceding.

The Usher of the Black Rod, having his deputy behind him, walked on first.

Gwynplaine followed.

They went up the steps, and entered the side door.

A few moments later, they were in a wide round room with a pillar in the centre; it was

the base of a turret, a ground-floor hall, receiving its light through narrow arched windows, like apse lancets, and which must have been dark at high noon. A dim light sometimes forms a part of solemnity. Darkness is majestic.

In this room thirteen men were standing. Three in front, six in the second row, four behind.

Of the first three, one wore a scarlet velvet coat, and the two others had red coats too, but of satin. All three had the arms of England embroidered on the shoulder.

The six of the second row wore dalmatic vests of white watered silk, each with a different heraldic device on his breast.

The last four, all in black watered silk, were distinguished from one another; the first, by a blue cloak; the second, by a scarlet Saint George on his stomach; the third, by two crimson crosses embroidered on his breast and back; the fourth, by a black fur collar, called sable. All wore wigs, were bare-headed, and carried swords at their side.

Their faces were scarcely distinguishable in the half-light. They could not see Gwynplaine's face.

The Usher of the Black Rod raised his wand, and said:

"My Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron

Clancharlie and Hunkerville, I, Usher of the Black Rod, first officer of the presence chamber, hand your Lordship over to Garter, King-at-Arms of England."

The individual in the velvet coat, leaving the others behind him, bowed to the ground before Gwynplaine, and said:

"My Lord Fermain Clancharlie, I am Garter, First King-at-Arms of England. I am the officer created and crowned by his Grace, the Duke of Norfolk, hereditary Earl Marshal. I have sworn obedience to the King, the peers and the Knights of the Garter. The day of my coronation, when the Earl Marshal of England poured a goblet of wine on my head, I solemnly promised to serve the nobility, to avoid the company of persons of bad repute, to excuse, rather than blame, people of quality, and to assist widows and maidens. It is I who have the charge of regulating the funeral ceremonies of peers, and who have the care and the guardianship of their armorial bearings. I place myself at your Lordship's orders."

The first of the two others in satin coats, bowed and said:

"My Lord, I am Clarence, Second King-at-Arms of England. I am the officer who regulates the burial of nobles below the peers. I place myself at your Lordship's orders."

The other man with the satin coat, bowed and said:

"My Lord, I am Norroy, Third King-at-Arms of England. I place myself at your Lordship's orders."

The six of the second row, rigid, and without bowing, made a step forward.

The first at Gwynplaine's right said:

"My Lord, we are the six Dukes-at-Arms of England. I am York."

Then each of the heralds, or Dukes-at-Arms, spoke in his turn and named himself.

"I am Lancaster."

"I am Richmond."

"I am Chester."

"I am Somerset."

"I am Windsor."

The coats-of-arms they bore on their breasts were those of the counties and the cities whose names they bore.

The four who were dressed in black, behind the heralds, remained silent.

The Garter King-at-Arms pointed them out to Gwynplaine, and said: "My Lord, here are the four Poursuivants-at-Arms."

"Blue Cloak."

The man in the blue cloak bowed his head.

"Red Dragon."

The man with the Saint George bowed.

"Red Cross."

The man with the scarlet crosses bowed.

"Port-cullis."

The man with the sable fur bowed.

At a sign from the King-at-Arms, the first of the poursuivants, Blue Cloak, came forward, and took the silver cloth cushion and the crowned portfolio from the hands of the Usher's officer.

And the King-at-Arms said to the Usher of the Black Rod:

"So be it. I leave the reception of His Lordship to your honor."

These observances of etiquette, and others which are to follow, were the old ceremonial previous to Henry VIII., which Anne, for a time tried to revive. Nothing of all this is done now-a-days. Yet the House of Lords believes itself immutable; and if the immemorial exists anywhere, it is there!

Nevertheless, it changes. *E pur si muove.*

What has become, for instance, of the *May-Pole*, which the City of London raised on the road of the peers going to Parliament? The last one which played any part was raised in 1713. Since then the "May-pole" has disappeared. Desuetude.

In appearance things seem motionless; in reality, all is change. Thus takes the title: Albemarle. It seems eternal. Six families have

passed away under this title: Odo, Mandeville, Bethune, Plantagenet, Beauchamp, Monk. Five different names have succeeded to the title of Leicester: Beaumont, Brewose, Dudley, Sydney, Coke. Under the title of Lincoln, six. Under Pembroke, seven, etc. Families change, under unchanging titles. The superficial historian believes in immutability. In fact, there is no duration. Man can be but a wave. All humanity is the sea.

Aristocracies take pride in that which is a woman's humiliation—growing old; but women and aristocracies have the same illusion: that they remain unchanged.

It is probable that the House of Lords will not recognize itself in what has just been read, and what will be read; something like the pretty woman of former days, who does not want to have wrinkles. The mirror is an old defendant; it has made up its mind to it.

To bring out the resemblance, is the whole duty of the historian.

The King-at-Arms, addressed Gwynplaine. "Be pleased to follow me, my Lord."

He added:

"You will be saluted. Your Lordship need only raise the brim of your hat."

And they went in procession towards a door at the other side of the round hall.

The Usher of the Black Rod led the procession.

Blue Cloak followed, bearing the cushion; then the King-at-Arms; behind the King-at-Arms came Gwynplaine, hat on head.

The other Kings-at-Arms, heralds, and poursuivants, remained in the round hall.

Gwynplaine, preceded by the Usher of the Black Rod, and under the leadership of the King-at-Arms, followed an itinerary from hall to hall, which it would be impossible to retrace to-day, as the old home of the Parliament of England has been torn down.

Amongst others, he crossed that Gothic chamber, where the last meeting between James II. and Monmouth took place, and which had witnessed the useless kneeling of the cowardly nephew before the ferocious uncle. Around this room, hung on the wall in the order of their dates, were the full length portraits of nine ancient peers, with their names and coats-of-arms: Lord Nansladron, 1305. Lord Baliol, 1306. Lord Benestede, 1314. Lord Cantilupe, 1356. Lord Montbegon, 1357. Lord Tibotot, 1372. Lord Zouch of Codnor, 1615. Lord Bella-Aqua, without date. Lord Harren and Surrey, Count de Blois, no date.

Night having come, there were lamps, at intervals, in the galleries. Brass chandeliers

with wax candles were lighted in the rooms, which were about as light as the side aisles of a church.

No one except the necessary persons were met there.

In one room crossed by the party, there stood, with respectfully inclined heads, the four clerks of the Signet, and the clerk of the State papers.

In another, there was the honorable Philip Sydenham, Knight Banneret, Lord of Brympton, in Somerset. The Knight Banneret, is one who is knighted in war-time, by the king, under the unfurled royal flag.

In another, was the most ancient baronet of England, Sir Edmund Bacon, of Suffolk, the heir of Sir Nicholas, and entitled *primus baronetorum Angliæ*. Behind Sir Edmund stood his archer, bearing his arquebuse, and his squire, bearing the arms of Ulster; the baronets being the born defenders of the County of Ulster, in Ireland.

In another, was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, accompanied by his four accountants, and by the two deputies of the Lord-Chamberlain, whose duty it is to cleave the tallies. Besides these, the Master of the Mint, having a pound sterling in his open hand, made, as is customary with pounds, by milling. These eight persons saluted the new lord.

At the entrance to the corridor hung with matting, which was the communication between the Lower and the Upper House, Gwynplaine was saluted by Sir Thomas Mansell, of Margam, Comptroller of the Queen's Household, and member of Parliament for Glamorgan; and at the exit, by a deputation "of one for every two" of the Barons of the Cinque-Ports, ranged upon his right and left, four by four, the Cinque-Ports numbering eight. William Ashburnham saluted him for Hastings, Matthew Aylmor for Dover, Josias Burchett for Sandwich, Sir Philip Boteler for Hyeth, John Brewer for New Rumney, Edward Southwell for the city of Rye, James Hayes for the city of Winchelsea, and George Nailor for the city of Seaford.

The King-at-Arms, as Gwynplaine was about to return their salutations, recalled the order of etiquette in a low tone.

"Only the brim of your hat, my Lord."

Gwynplaine did as he was told.

He reached the Painted Chamber, where there were no paintings, except a few saints, and among them Edward the Confessor; these were under the vaultings of the long ogive windows which were divided in two by the flooring; Westminster Hall having the lower, and the Painted Chamber, the upper half.

Beyond the wooden barrier, which ran quite across the Painted Chamber, there were the three Secretaries of State, important men. The first of these officers had in his charge the south of England, Ireland and the Colonies; besides France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Turkey. The second, directed the north of England, and had the surveillance of the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Poland and Muscovy. The third, a Scotchman, had Scotland. The first two were Englishmen. One of them was the Honorable Robert Harley, a member of Parliament for the city of New-Radnor. A Scotch member, Mungo Graham, Esquire, a relative of the Duke of Montrose, was present. All bowed to Gwynplaine in silence.

Gwynplaine touched the brim of his hat.

The barrier-keeper raised the hinged wooden arm, which gave entrance to the rear of the Painted Chamber, where the long, green-draped table, reserved for the lords alone, stood.

A lighted branched candlestick stood on the table.

Gwynplaine, preceded by the Usher of the Black Rod, Blue Cloak and Garter, entered this privileged compartment.

The barrier-keeper closed the entrance behind Gwynplaine.

The King-at-Arms, stopped as soon as he had crossed the barrier.

The Painted Chamber was spacious.

At its one end, just below the royal scutcheon, which was between two windows, two old men could be seen standing, dressed in red velvet robes, with two bands of ermine edged with gold braid on their shoulders, and hats with white plumes, over their wigs. Through the opening of the robes, their silk suits and the hilts of their swords could be seen.

Behind them stood a motionless man, dressed in black watered silk, who bore aloft a great golden mace, surmounted by a crowned lion.

This was the Mace-Bearer of the Peers of England.

The lion is their insignia: *And the lions are the Barons and the Peers*, says the manuscript chronicle of Bertrand Duguesclin.

The King-at-Arms indicated the two personages in the velvet robes to Gwynplaine, and whispered:

"My Lord, these are your equals. You will return the salutation exactly as it is made to you. These two lords here present, are two barons, and your sponsors, designated by the Lord-Chancellor. They are very old, and nearly blind. They are the ones who are to introduce you into the House of Lords. The

first is Charles Mildmay, Lord Fitzwalter, sixth lord of the bench of barons, the second is Augustus Arundel, Lord Arundel of Trerice, thirty-eighth lord of the bench of barons."

The King-at-Arms, taking a step towards the two old men, raised his voice:

"Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie, Baron Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, salutes your Lordships."

The two lords raised their hats above their heads at arm's length, then put them on again.

Gwynplaine returned the salute in the same manner.

The Usher of the Black Rod advanced, then Blue Cloak, then Garter.

The Mace-Bearer came forward and stood before Gwynplaine, having the two lords at his sides, Lord Fitzwalter at his right, and Lord Arundel of Trerice at his left. Lord Arundel was very decrepit, and the older of the two. He died the following year, leaving his peerage to his grandson, John, a minor; which peerage, moreover, became extinct in 1768.

This procession left the Painted Chamber and entered a pilastered gallery, where at each pilaster, there stood alternately English pikemen and Scotch halberdiers.

These Scotch halberdiers were that magnificent bare-legged troupe, which, at a later day, was worthy to face the French cavalry and

those cuirassiers of the king, at Fontenoy, to whom their colonel said: "Gentlemen and masters, secure your hats, we are to have the honor of charging."

The captain of the pikemen and the captain of the halberdiers saluted Gwynplaine and the two sponsor lords, with their swords. The soldiers saluted, with their pikes and with their halberds.

At the end of the gallery, there shone a great door, which was so magnificent that its two leaves seemed two sheets of gold.

Each side of the door there stood a motionless man. They could be recognized as "door-keepers" by their liveries.

A short distance before reaching this door, the gallery widened, and there was a glazed circular recess.

In this circular recess, on a huge-backed arm-chair, sat a personage, who was most august by the enormity of his robe and his wig. It was William Cowper, Lord-Chancellor of England.

It is a great quality to be more infirm than the king. William Cowper was near-sighted; so was Anne, but in a slighter measure. This near-sightedness of William Cowper pleased Her Majesty's myopia, and made the Queen choose him as her Chancellor and the keeper of the royal conscience.

William Cowper had a thin upper lip and a thick under lip, a sign of semi-goodness.

The glazed circular recess was lighted by a lamp hung from the ceiling.

The Lord-Chancellor, gravely sitting in his high-backed arm-chair, had a table at his right, where the Clerk of the Crown was seated, and a table at his left, where the Clerk of the Parliament was seated.

Each of the two clerks had an open register and writing-desk before him.

Behind the Lord-Chancellor's chair stood his Mace-Bearer, bearing the crowned mace. Besides these, there were the train-bearer and the purse-bearer, in great wigs. All these functionaries still exist.

Upon a side table, near the arm-chair, there lay a golden-hilted sword, with a sheath and belt of flame-colored velvet.

Behind the Clerk of the Crown stood an officer, holding a robe, which was the coronation robe, wide open, with his two hands.

Behind the Clerk of the Parliament, another officer held another open robe, which was the Parliament robe.

Both these robes of crimson velvet, lined with white taffetas silk, with two bands of ermine edged with gold braid at the shoulders, were alike; with the exception that the coronation robe had a deeper ermine cape.

A third officer, who was the "librarian," carried the "red book" on a Flanders leather cushion. This was a little book bound in red morocco, containing the list of peers and commons, besides some blank pages and a pencil, which it was customary to hand to each new member entering Parliament.

The procession, closed by Gwynplaine between his two sponsor peers, stopped in front of the Lord-Chancellor's arm-chair.

The two sponsor lords took off their hats. Gwynplaine did as they did.

The King-at-Arms received the silver cloth cushion from the hands of Blue Cloak, and presented the black portfolio upon the cushion to the Lord-Chancellor.

The Lord-Chancellor took the portfolio and handed it to the Clerk of the Parliament. The clerk came to receive it with ceremony, then went and sat down again.

The Clerk of the Parliament opened the portfolio, and rose.

The portfolio contained the two usual messages; the royal patent addressed to the House of Lords, and the writ of summons, addressed to the new peer.

The clerk, standing, read the two messages aloud, with respectful deliberateness.

The writ of summons addressed to Lord Fermain Clancharlie ended with the usual

formula: . . "We strictly enjoin you, upon the faith and the allegiance which you owe us, to come and take your place, in person, among the prelates and the peers sitting in our Parliament at Westminster, in order to give your advice, in all honor and conscience, upon the affairs of the kingdom and the church."

The reading of the messages ended, the Lord-Chancellor raised his voice.

"The message is acknowledged to the crown. Lord Fermain Clancharlie, does your Lordship renounce trans-substantiation, the adoration of the Saints, and the Mass?"

Gwynplaine bowed.

"The act is acknowledged," said the Lord-Chancellor.

And the Clerk of the Parliament resumed:

"His Lordship has taken the Test."

The Lord-Chancellor added:

"My Lord Fermain Clancharlie, you can take your seat."

"So be it," said the two sponsors.

The King-at-Arms rose, took the sword from the side-table, and buckled the belt around Gwynplaine's waist.

"This done," say the old Norman charts, "the peer takes his sword and goes up to the high seats and is present at the audience."

Gwynplaine heard some one behind him say to him:

"I invest your Lordship with the robes of Parliament."

And at the same time, the officer who was speaking to him, and who was carrying this robe, hung it on him, and tied the black ribbon of the ermine cape around his neck.

Gwynplaine, with his crimson robe on his back, and the golden sword at his side, was now just like the two lords he had at his right and left.

The librarian presented him the red book and slipped it in the pocket of his waistcoat.

The King-at-Arms murmured in his ear:

"My Lord, on entering, you will salute the royal chair."

The royal chair, is the throne.

Meantime the two clerks were writing, each at his table; one, in the register of the Crown, the other, in the register of Parliament.

Both, one after the other, the Clerk for the Crown first, however, brought their books to the Lord-Chancellor, who signed them.

After having signed both registers, the Lord-Chancellor rose, saying: "Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie, Baron Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone, in Italy, you are welcome among your peers, the spiritual and temporal lords of Great Britain."

Gwynplaine's two sponsors touched his shoulder. He turned.

And the great gilded door at the end of the gallery opened its two folds.

It was the door of the Chamber of the Peers of England.

Thirty-six hours had not elapsed since Gwynplaine, surrounded by another escort, had seen the iron door of Southwark jail open before him.

All these clouds passed over his head with terrible rapidity; the clouds, were events; the rapidity, was a taking by storm.

II.

IMPARTIALITY

The creation of an equality with the king, called peerage, was a useful fiction in barbarous times. This rudimentary political expedient produced different results in France and in England. In France, the peer was an imitation king; in England, he was a real prince. Not so grand as in France, but more real. One might say: less, but worse.

Peerage was born in France. The epoch is uncertain: under Charlemagne, according to the legend; under Robert the Wise, according to history. History is no surer of what it says than legend. Favin writes: "The King of France wished to draw the great ones of his State about him, by that magnificent title of Peers, as if they were his equals."

The peerage bifurcated very quickly, and passed from France to England.

The English peerage has been a great fact, and almost a great thing. It had the Saxon

Wittenagemot as its precedent. The Danish thane and the Norman vavasseur became blended in the baron. Baron is the same word as *vir*, which is translated into *varon* in Spanish, and which signifies, *par excellence*, man. As early as 1075, the barons make their power felt by the King. And what a King! William, the Conqueror. In 1086 they give a basis to feudalism, this basis is the *Doomsday-Book*. "Book of the Last Judgment." Under John Lackland, there was a conflict; the French nobility took a high hand with Great Britain, and the peerage of France called the King of England to its bar. Indignation of the English barons. At the coronation of Philip Augustus, the King of England, as Duke of Normandy, bore the first square banner, and the Duke of Guyenne, the second. "The war of the lords," broke out against this foreign, vassal king. The barons imposed Magna Charta on the contemptible King John, and from this the House of Lords has sprung. The Pope took up the King's cause, and excommunicated the lords. The date was 1215, and the Pope was Innocent III., who wrote the *Veni sancte Spiritus*, and who sent John Lackland the four cardinal virtues in the form of four golden rings. The lords persisted. A long duel, which lasted several generations. Pembroke

fought. 1248 was the year of the "Provisions of Oxford." Twenty-four barons limited the King's power, discussed him, and called a knight from each county to take part in the extended quarrel. This was the dawn of the Commons. Later, the lords added two citizens for each city, and two burgesses for each town, to themselves. This is why peers were judges of the validity of the election to the Commons, up to Elizabeth's time. From their jurisdiction arose the adage: "The deputies must be named without the three P's; *sine Prece, sine Pretio, sine Poculo;*" which, however, did not prevent rotten boroughs. In 1293, the King of England was still amenable to the tribunal of the peers of France; and Philip the Fair cited Edward I. to appear before him. Edward I. was the king who commanded his son to have him boiled after his death, and to carry his bones to the war. During such royal follies the lords felt the need of strengthening Parliament; they divided it into two houses. Upper house and lower house. The lords arrogantly kept the supremacy. "If it happens that a member of the Commons be so bold as to speak disparagingly of the House of Lords, he is called to the bar to receive correction, and sometimes he is sent to the Tower." [Chamberlayne. "Present State of England." Volume II.,

Part 2d. Chapter IV., page 64. 1688.] There was the same distinction in voting. In the House of Lords they voted one by one, beginning by the last baron, who is called the "puisné." Each peer called, replies *content* or *not-content.* In the Commons they all voted together, by aye or no, in a flock. The Commons accuse; the peers judge. The peers, through contempt for figures, delegated the supervision of the Exchequer, thus called, according to some, from the table cloth, which represented a *checker-board,* and according to others, from the drawers of the old closet, where the treasure of the Kings of England was kept behind an iron grating, to the Commons, who took advantage of this. The Annual Register, the "Year-Book," dates from the close of the thirteenth century. In the War of the Roses, the weight of the lords was sometimes felt on the side of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, sometimes on the side of Edmund, Duke of York. Wat Tyler, the Lollards, Warwick, the King-Maker, all this mother-anarchy, from which freedom was to issue, has English feudalism as its secret, or avowed point of support. The lords were usefully jealous of the throne. To be jealous is to watch: they circumscribed the royal initiative, restricted the cases of high treason, raised false Richards against Henry IV.,

made themselves the umpires, decided the question of the three crowns, between the Duke of York and Margaret of Anjou, and, at need, levied armies, and had their battles, Shrewsbury, Tewkesbury, Saint Albans; which were sometimes lost, sometimes won. As early as the thirteenth century, they had won the victory of Lewes, and had driven the four brothers of the King, bastards of Isabella and the Earl of March, out of the kingdom; all four were usurers, and exploited Christians by means of Jews; princes on one side, swindlers on the other, a thing which has been seen again, but which was not well thought of at that time. Up to the fifteenth century, the Norman duke remained visible in the King of England, and acts of Parliament were written in French. From the time of Henry VII., by the will of the lords, they were written in English. England, which was British under Uther Pendragon, Roman under Cæsar, Saxon under the Heptarchy, Danish under Harold, Norman after William, became English, thanks to the lords. Then she became Anglican. To have one's religion in one's own home, is a great power. A non-resident pope drains national life. Mecca is an octopus. In 1534, London dismissed Rome; the peerage adopted the Reformation, and the lords accepted Luther. This was the retort to the excom-

munication of 1215. This suited Henry VIII., but in other respects the lords hindered him. A bull-dog before a bear; that was the attitude of the House of Lords towards Henry VIII. When Wolsey stole Whitehall from the nation, and when Henry VIII. stole Whitehall from Wolsey, who found fault? Four lords, Darcie of Chichester, Saint John of Bletso, and (two Norman names) Mountjoye and Mounteagle. The King usurped. The peerage encroached. Heredity has an element, incorruptibility; hence the insubordination of the lords. Even before Elizabeth, the barons stirred. The tortures of Durham were the result. That tyrannous petticoat is stained with blood. Elizabeth is a farthingale with a block under it. Elizabeth assembled Parliament as little as she could, and reduced the House of Lords to sixty-five members, of which a single one was a marquis, Winchester; and not one, a duke. However, in France the kings were equally jealous, and made the same elimination. Under Henry III., there were only eight ducal peerages, and it was to the King's great displeasure that the Baron de Mantes, the Baron de Coucy, the Baron de Coulommiers, the Baron de Châteauneuf in Timerais, the Baron de la Fère in Tardenois, the Baron de Mortagne, and some others, maintained themselves baron peers of France. In England

the crown gladly let the peerages die out; under Anne, to cite only one example, these extinctions had since the twelfth century, made a total of five hundred and sixty-five abolished peerages. The War of the Roses had begun the extirpation of dukes, which Mary Tudor finished with the axe. That was decapitating the nobility. To cut off the duke, was to cut off the head. Good policy, no doubt, but it is better to corrupt than to cut off. That is what James I. thought. He restored the duchy. He made a duke of his favorite, Villiers, who had made him a pig. [Villiers called James I. *Your Pigship.*] This transformed the feudal duke into the courtier duke. These soon swarmed. Charles II. will make duchesses of two of his mistresses, Barbara of Southampton and Louise of Quérouel. Under Anne there will be twenty-five dukes, of whom three will be foreigners, Cumberland, Cambridge and Schonberg. Did these court processes invented by James I., succeed? No. The House of Lords felt itself manipulated by intrigue, and grew angry. It was angry at James I., and at Charles I.; who, let it be observed in passing, perhaps had some share in killing his father, just as Maria de Medicis, may have had some share in killing her husband. There was a rupture between Charles I. and the peerage.

The lords, who, under James I., had summoned malfeasance to their bar, in the person of Bacon, tried treason, under Charles I., in the person of Stafford. They had condemned Bacon, they condemned Stafford. One lost his honor, the other lost his life. Charles I. was decapitated for the first time in Stafford. The lords lent their support to the Commons. The King convoked Parliament at Oxford, the revolution convoked it at London; forty-three peers went with the King, twenty-two with the republic. From this acceptance of the people by the lords, there arose the *Bill of Rights*, a sketch of our *Rights of Man;* a vague shadow projected from the dim distance of the future, by the revolution of France upon the revolution of England.

Such were the favors rendered. Involuntary ones, it is true. And dearly paid for; as this peerage is an enormous parasite. Yet they were considerable. The despotic work of Louis XI., of Richelieu and of Louis XIV., —the building up of a sultan, the dead level of abasement taken for equality, the bastinado administered by the sceptre, the multitude leveled by degradation—all this Turkish work done in France, was prevented in England by the lords. They made a wall of aristocracy, damming the King on one side, sheltering

the people on the other. They redeemed their arrogance towards the people, by insolence towards the King. Simon, Earl of Leicester, said to Henry III.: "King, thou hast lied." The lords imposed certain servitudes upon the crown; they irritated the King at the sensitive spot, at venery. Every lord, passing through a royal park, had the right to kill a deer. The lord was at home in the King's house. It is due to the House of Lords that the King's allowance at the Tower, is no greater than any peer's, namely, twelve pounds sterling per week. More yet. The uncrowning of kings, is due to it. The lords deprived John Lackland of his crown, degraded Edward II., deposed Richard II., broke down Henry VI. and made Cromwell possible. What a Louis XIV. there was in Charles I.! Thanks to Cromwell, he remained latent. However, let us remark by the way, that Cromwell himself, and no historian has paid attention to this fact, made pretensions to the peerage; that is what made him marry Elizabeth Bourchier, a descendant and heiress of a Cromwell, Lord Bourchier, whose peerage became extinct in 1471, and of a Bourchier, Lord Robesart, another peerage extinct in 1429. Sharing in the fearful growth of events, he found it shorter work to dominate by the suppression of the King, than

by reclaiming the peerage. The ceremonial of the lords, which was ominous at times, reached even to the King. The two sword-bearers of the Tower, who stood erect, with axe on shoulder, at the right and left of the accused peer summoned to the bar, were for the King, as well as for every other lord. During five centuries the ancient House of Lords had a plan, and followed it fixedly. Its days of absent-mindedness and weakness can be counted; for instance, that strange moment when it allowed itself to be seduced by the galley, loaded with cheese, ham and Greek wines, sent to it by Julius II. The English aristocracy was restless, haughty, irrepressible, watchful, patriotically suspicious. It was this aristocracy which at the end of the seventeenth century, by the tenth act of the year 1694, took away from the town of Stockbridge, in Southampton, the right to send members to Parliament, and forced the Commons to annul the election of this town, tainted with papistical fraud. It had imposed the test on James, Duke of York, and, on his refusal, had excluded him from the throne. He reigned, nevertheless, but the lords wound up by seizing and driving him away. This aristocracy has had some instinct of progress in its long duration. A certain appreciable quantity of light has always emanated from

it, except towards the end, which is now at hand. Under James II. it maintained the proportion of three hundred and forty-six burgesses, against ninety-two knights, in the Lower House; the sixteen barons, by courtesy, of the Cinque-Ports, being more than counterbalanced by the fifty citizens of the twenty-five cities. Notwithstanding that it was very corrupt and egotistical, this aristocracy had a singular impartiality. It is severely judged. The good opinion of history is all for the Commons; this might be argued. We think the part played by the lords a very great one. Oligarchy, is independence in a barbarous state; but it is independence. Look at Poland: nominally a kingdom, really a republic. The peers of England were suspicious of the throne and kept it under guardianship. On many an occasion, the lords knew how to displease, better than the Commons. They gave check to the King. Thus, in 1694, a remarkable year, the triennial Parliaments, rejected by the Commons, because William III. did not want them, had been voted for by the peers. William III., irritated at this, took the Castle of Pendennis from the Earl of Bath, and deprived Viscount Mordaunt of all his offices. The House of Lords was the republic of Venice, in the heart of the realm of England. To reduce the King to a doge, was its

object, and it increased the nation's power, in proportion as it decreased the King's.

Royalty understood it, and hated the peerage. Each side sought to lessen the other. These diminutions were to the advantage of the people, contributing to their growth. The two blind powers, monarchy and oligarchy, did not see that they were working for a third —democracy. What joy it was for the court, in the last century, to be able to hang a peer, Lord Ferrers!

However, they hung him with a silken rope. Out of politeness.

"They would not have hung a peer of France." A haughty remark made by the Duc de Richelieu. It is true. They would have beheaded him. Out of still greater politeness. Montmorency-Tancarville signed himself: "Peer of France and of England," thus throwing the English peerage into the second rank. The peers of France were higher and less powerful; holding more to rank than to authority, and to precedence more than to domination. There was between them and the lords that shade of difference which separates vanity from pride. The important question for the peers of France, was to take precedence over foreign princes and Spanish grandees; to rank above Venetian patricians; to make the Marshals of France, the Constable

and Admiral of France, even though he were the Count de Toulouse and the son of Louis XIV., sit on the lower benches of Parliament; to distinguish between the duchies in the male and female line; to maintain the proper distance between a simple county like Armagnac or Albret, and a peerage county, like Evreux; to wear by right, in certain cases, the blue ribbon, or the Golden Fleece at twenty-five years of age; to counter-balance the Duc de la Tremoille, the most ancient peer at court, by the Duc d'Uzès, the most ancient peer in Parliament; to claim as many pages and horses to their carriages as an elector; to have themselves entitled *Monseigneur*, by the first president; to discuss whether the Duc de Maine ranked as a peer, as the Counte d'Eu, from the year 1458; or to cross the grand chamber diagonally, or down the sides. The more important matter for the lords were the Navigation Act, the Test Act, the enrollment of Europe in the service of England, the domination of the seas, the expulsion of the Stuarts, the war with France. Here, in France, etiquette above everything else; there, in England, empire above everything. The peers of England had the prey, the peers of France had the shadow.

In short, the House of Lords in England, was a starting point; in civilization, this is

an immense thing. It has had the honor of beginning a nation. It was the first incarnation of the unity of a people. English resistance, that all-powerful, obscure force, was born in the House of Lords. The barons, by a series of acts of violence against the King, have sketched out his final dethronement. The House of Lords is a little sad now at what it has unwillingly and unconsciously done. All the more, because it is irrevocable. What are concessions? Restitutions. And nations know it. "I grant," says the King. "I get back my own," says the nation. The House of Lords thought it created the privilege of the peers, it produced the right of citizens. That vulture, aristocracy, has hatched the eagle's egg, liberty.

To-day the egg is broken, the eagle is soaring, the vulture is dying.

Aristocracy is dying, as England is growing.

But let us be just towards aristocracy. It held the balance against royalty; it was a counter-weight. It was an obstacle to despotism, it was a barrier.

Let us thank it, and bury it.

III.

THE OLD HALL

Near Westminster Abbey, there was an ancient Norman palace, which was burned under Henry VIII. Two of its wings were saved. Edward VI. put the House of Lords in one, and the House of Commons in the other.

Neither the two wings, nor the two halls are now in existence; all that has been rebuilt.

We have said, and we must repeat it, there is no resemblance between the House of Lords of to-day, and the former House of Lords. The old palace has been torn down; this tore down a little of the old usages. The strokes of the pickaxe on monuments have their counterstrokes in customs and charters. An old stone does not fall without dragging down an old law. Remove the Senate from a square hall into a round one, and it will be something different. A change in a shell alters the shape of the mollusk.

If you wish to preserve an old thing, human or divine, a code, a dogma, a patriciate or a priesthood, never make any part of it over, not even the cover. Piece it, at the utmost. For instance: Jesuitism is a patch on Catholicism. Treat edifices as you treat institutions.

Shadows should dwell in ruins. Decrepit powers are not at ease in freshly decorated dwellings. Ragged institutions, need ruined palaces.

To show the interior of the former House of Lords, is to show the unknown.

History is night. There is no middle distance in history. Decay and obscurity immediately take possession of all that is not on the front of the stage. When the scene is shifted, there is effacement and oblivion. The Past has a synonym—the Unknown.

The peers of England, as a Court of Justice, sat in the great hall of Westminster and, as a high legislative chamber, in a special hall called the House of Lords.

Besides the Court of the Peers of England, which only assembles when convoked by the Crown, the two great English tribunals, inferior to the Court of Peers, but superior to every other jurisdiction, sat in the great hall of Westminster. They occupied two adjoining compartments at the upper end of

that hall. The first tribunal was the Court of King's Bench, over which the King was supposed to preside; the second, was the Court of Chancery, over which the Chancellor presided. One was a Court of Justice; the other was a Court of Mercy. It was the Chancellor who advised the King when to pardon; but he rarely did it. These two courts, which still exist, interpreted legislation, and worked it over a little. The judge's art consists in carpentering the Code into Jurisprudence. A trade, by which Equity gets along as well as it can. Legislation was manufactured and applied in that severe place, the great hall of Westminster. This hall had a vaulting of chestnut wood; where spiders could not spin their webs; it was certainly enough to spin them over the laws.

To sit as a court, and to sit as a chamber, are two separate things. This duality constitutes supreme power. The Long Parliament, which began the 3d of November, 1640, felt the revolutionary necessity for this two-edged sword. So it declared itself as a House of Lords, to be a judicial, as well as a legislative, power.

This double power was immemorial in the House of Lords. As we have just said, the lords occupied Westminster Hall as judges; as legislators, they had another hall.

This other hall, properly called the House of Lords, was oblong and narrow. Its only light came from four deeply-set windows, in the vaulting, receiving their light from the roof; and, in addition, above the royal dais, there was a bull's eye, with six curtained panes; at night there was no light but that of twelve half-candelabra fastened to the wall. The Senate Hall at Venice was lighted still less. A certain gloom pleases these omnipotent owls.

A high vaulting, with polyhedric panels and gilded recesses, made a rounded ceiling over the hall where the lords assembled. The Commons had nothing but a flat ceiling; everything has a meaning in monarchical construction. At one end of the long House of Lords, there was a door, at the other, opposite it, the throne. A few steps from the door, there was a bar, a transverse barrier, a sort of frontier, marking the spot where the people ended, and the nobility began. At the right of the throne was a fire-place, emblazoned at the pinnacle, and presenting two marble bas-reliefs, one the victory of Cuthwolf over the Britons in 572, the other, the geometrical plan of the borough of Dunstable, which has but four streets, parallel to the four quarters of the world. The throne was raised three steps from the ground. The throne was

called "the royal chair." On the two walls facing each other there hung a huge tapestry, given to the lords by Elizabeth, and, in successive pictures, it represented all the adventures of the Armada, from the time of its departure from Spain to its shipwreck off England. The lofty hulls and upper decks of the vessels were woven in gold and silver threads, which had blackened with time. Against this tapestry, cut at intervals by the candelabra, there were placed at the right of the throne, three rows of benches for the bishops, and at the left, three rows of benches for the dukes, marquises and earls, in tiers and separated by steps. The dukes sat on the three benches of the first section; the marquises, on the three benches of the second; the earls, on the three benches of the third. The viscount's bench at right angles faced the throne; and behind, between the viscounts and the bar, there were two benches for the barons. On the high bench, at the right of the throne, were the two archbishops, Canterbury and York; on the intermediate bench, three bishops: London, Durham and Winchester, the other bishops sat on the lowest bench. Between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other bishops, there is this considerable distance, that he is bishop *by Divine Providence;* while the others are bishops only *by*

Divine Permission. To the right of the throne, there was a chair for the Prince of Wales, and at the left, folding-chairs for the royal dukes, and behind these folding-chairs, rows of benches for the young minor peers, who were not able to take their seats in the House. Quantities of fleurs-de-lys everywhere; and the great escutcheon of England on the four walls above the peers, as well as above the King. The sons of peers, and heirs to peerages, were present at the debates behind the throne, between the dais and the wall. The throne at one end, and the three rows of benches for the peers, on the three sides of the hall, left a large, square space free. In this square, covered by the state carpet, into which the coat-of-arms of England was woven, there were four woolsacks; one in front of the throne, and on this the Chancellor sat, between the mace and the seal; one before the bishops, where the Judges, Councillors of State, sat, who had the right to a seat, but not to a vote; one before the dukes, marquises, and earls, where the Secretaries of State sat; one before the viscounts and barons, where the Clerk of the Crown and the Clerk of the Parliament sat, and upon which the two under-clerks wrote, kneeling. In the centre of the square was a large draped table, covered with bundles of paper, registers and account-

books, with massive ink-stands of goldsmiths' work, and high candlesticks at the four angles. The peers took their seats in chronological order, each one according to the date of the creation of his peerage. They took rank according to their titles; and, in titles, according to priority.

The Usher of the Black Rod stood at the bar, with his wand in his hand. Inside of the door, stood the usher's deputy; and outside, the Crier of the Black Rod, whose duty it was to open the sittings of the court of justice by the cry, *Oyez!* in French, uttered three times, with a solemn emphasis on the first syllable. Near the crier, was the Sergeant Mace-Bearer of the Chancellor.

At royal ceremonies, the temporal peers wore coronets on their heads, and the spiritual peers, mitres.

The archbishops wore a mitre with a ducal coronet, and the bishops, who ranked after the viscounts, mitres with a baron's circlet.

A strange thing, and quite an instructive one, is, that this square, formed by the throne, the bishops, and the barons, and in which the magistrates are on their knees, was the ancient form of parliament in France under the first two dynasties. Authority had the same aspect in France and in England. Hincmar, in the *De Ordinatione Sacri Palatii*, written

in the year 853, describes a sitting of the House of Lords at Westminster, in the eighteenth century. A curious sort of descriptive statement, made nine hundred years before the event.

What is history? An echo of the past in the future. A reflection of the future thrown upon the past.

The assembly of Parliament was obligatory only every seven years.

The lords deliberated in secret with closed doors. The sessions of the Commons were public. Popularity seemed a lessening of authority.

The number of lords was unlimited. Creating lords was the threat of the Crown. One way of governing.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the House of Lords already had a very large number of members. They have grown even more numerous since then. It is politic to dilute the aristocracy. Perhaps Elizabeth made a mistake in condensing the peerage into sixty-five lords. A less numerous nobility, is more intense. In assemblies, the more members there are, the less heads there will be. James II. had felt this when he raised the Upper House to one hundred and eighty-eight lords; one hundred and eighty-six, if we subtract the two duchies of the royal alcove, Portsmouth and Cleveland, from these

peerages. Under Anne, the total number of lords, including the bishops, was two hundred and seven.

Without counting the Duke of Cumberland, the Queen's husband, there were twenty-five dukes, of whom the first, Norfolk, could not take his seat, as he was a Catholic; and of whom the junior, Cambridge, Electoral Prince of Hanover, took his seat, although a foreigner. Winchester, termed first and only marquis in England, as Astorga, was the only marquis in Spain, was absent, as he was a Jacobite; there were five marquises, of whom Lindsey was the premier, and Lothian the junior; seventy-nine earls, of whom the premier was Derby, and the junior, Islay; nine viscounts, of whom the premier was Hereford, and the junior Lonsdale; and sixty-two barons, of whom the premier was Abergaveny, and the junior Hervey. Lord Hervey, being the junior baron, was what was called "Puisné" of the House. Derby, of whom Oxford, Shrewsbury and Kent took precedence, and who was only the fourth under James II. had now become the premier earl under Anne. Two Chancellors' names had disappeared from the list of the barons,—Verulam, under which history finds Bacon, and Wem, under which it finds Jeffreys. Bacon, Jeffreys, both diversely gloomy names. In

1705, the twenty-six bishops were only twenty-five, the seat of Chester being vacant. Among the bishops, some were very great lords, such as William Talbot, bishop of Oxford, the head of the Protestant branch of his family. Others were eminent doctors, like John Sharpe, Archbishop of York, formerly Dean of Norwich; the poet, Thomas Spratt, Bishop of Rochester, a good, old, apoplectic man; and that Bishop of Lincoln, who was to die Archbishop of Canterbury, Wake, the adversary of Bossuet.

On important occasions, and when a communication from the Crown to the House was to be expected, all this august multitude in robes, in wigs, in mitres, or plumed hats, drew up its lines, and ranged its rows of heads along the walls of the House of Lords, where one dimly saw the tempest exterminating the Armada. The unexpressed meaning of this was: "The storm is at the orders of England."

IV.

THE OLD HOUSE OF LORDS

All the ceremony of Gwynplaine's investiture, from his entrance under King's Gate to the taking of the test in the glazed circular recess, had taken place in a sort of semi-darkness.

Lord William Cowper had not allowed any one to give him, the Chancellor of England, any too circumstantial details, regarding the disfiguration of young Lord Fermain Clancharlie, finding it beneath his dignity to know that a peer was not handsome, and feeling that his dignity would be lowered, by the boldness that an inferior would show in bringing him information of this nature. It is certain that a common man takes pleasure in saying: "That prince is humpbacked." Hence, it is offensive for a lord to be deformed. To the few words that the Queen had said to him about it, the Lord-Chancellor had limited himself to replying: "A lord has his peerage for his face." Upon the affidavits that he had

been obliged to verify and certify, he had however, clearly understood. Hence, his precautions.

The new lord's face might make some sensation on his entrance in the House. It was necessary to avoid this. The Lord-Chancellor had taken his measures for the purpose. To have as few scenes as possible, is the fixed idea of rule and conduct, in great personages. The hatred of incidents is a part of their gravity. It was necessary to arrange matters, so that the admission of Gwynplaine, should pass off without any hindrance, and like that of every other heir to the peerage.

That is why the Lord-Chancellor had arranged the reception of Lord Clancharlie, for an evening session. The Lord-Chancellor being the door-keeper, *quodammodo ostiarius*, say the Norman charters, *januarum cancellorumque potestas*, says Tertullian, he can officiate outside of the room on the threshold, and Lord William Cowper had made use of his right, by performing all the formalities of the investiture of Lord Fermain Clancharlie, in the glazed recess. Moreover, he had advanced the hour, so that the new peer could make his entry into the chamber, even before the session had begun.

As to the investiture of a peer on the threshold, and outside of the chamber, there were

precedents. The first hereditary baron created by patent, John de Beauchamp, of Holt Castle, made Baron of Kidderminster, by Richard II., in 1387, was received in this way.

In renewing this precedent, however, the Lord-Chancellor was creating an embarrassment for himself, of which he felt the inconvenience less than two years later, at the time of the entrance of the Viscount Newhaven, into the House of Lords.

Being shortsighted, as we have said, Lord William Cowper had hardly seen Gwynplaine's disfigurement; the two lord sponsors had not seen it at all. They were two, nearly blind, old men.

The Lord-Chancellor had chosen them for that express reason.

Better still, the Lord-Chancellor having only seen Gwynplaine's stature and carriage, had found that he had "a very fine appearance."

At the time when the door-keepers had opened the great folding-doors before Gwynplaine, there were but few peers in the house. These lords were nearly all old. In assemblies, the old members are the punctual ones; just as, towards women, they are the most assiduous. On the dukes' bench, there were but two dukes, one white-headed, the other gray;

Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, and Schonberg, son of that Schonberg, a German, by birth, a Frenchman, by his marshal's staff, and English, by his peerage, who, banished by the Edict of Nantes, after having fought against England as a Frenchman, fought against France as an Englishman. On the benches of the spiritual lords, there was above, only the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of England, and below, Doctor Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely, talking to Evelyn Pierrepont, Marquis of Dorchester, who was explaining the difference between a gabion and a curtain, and between palisades and fraises; the former, being a row of posts in front of the tents, serving to protect the encampment; and fraises, being a circle of pointed stakes under a parapet of a fortress, to prevent scaling on the part of the besiegers, and desertion by the besieged; and the marquis was teaching the bishop how a redoubt can be fraised, by putting the stakes half inside the ground and half out. Thomas Thynne, Viscount Weymouth, had gone up to a chandelier, and was examining a plan made by his architect, for making a lawn in his garden at Long Leate, in Wiltshire, in the style called, "cut turf," by means of squares of turf alternating with squares of yellow sand, red sand, river shells, and fine coal dust. On the

viscounts' bench, there was a pell-mell of old lords, Essex, Ossulstone, Peregrine, Osborn, William Zulestein, Earl of Rochfort, among them there were a few young ones, of the faction which did not wear wigs, surrounding Price Devereux, Viscount Hereford, and discussing the question whether an infusion of Appalachian holly, is tea. "Very nearly," said Osborn. "Quite," said Essex. All this was attentively listened to by Pawlett of Saint John, a cousin of Bolingbroke, whose pupil Voltaire became, in a certain measure, a little later on; for Voltaire, begun by Pere Porée, was finished by Bolingbroke. On the marquises' bench, Thomas Grey, Marquis of Kent, Lord-Chamberlain to the Queen, was asserting to Robert Bertie, Marquis of Lindsey, Lord-Chamberlain of England, that two French refugees, Monsieur Lecoq, formerly Counsellor to the Parliament of Paris, and Monsieur Ravenel, a Breton gentleman, had won the first prize in the great English lottery of 1614. The Earl of Wymes was reading a book called: "Curious Observances of the Sibylline Oracles." John Campbell, Earl of Greenwich, famous for his long chin, his gaiety and his eighty-seven years, was writing to his mistress. Lord Chandos was trimming his nails. The sitting which was about to follow being a royal one, in which the Crown

would be represented by commissioners, two assistant door-keepers were placing a red velvet bench in front of the throne. On the second woolsack there sat the Master of the Rolls, *sacrorum scriniorum magister*, who at that time had the house belonging to the converted Jews, as his residence. On the fourth woolsack, the two kneeling under-clerks were turning over the leaves of the registers.

In the meantime, the Lord-Chancellor took his seat on the first woolsack, the officers of the Chamber took their places, some seated, the others standing, the Archbishop of Canterbury rose and said the prayer, and the sitting of the House began. Gwynplaine had entered sometime before, without any one taking notice of him; the second bench of barons where his seat was, being near the bar, he had only a few steps to take. The two lords, his sponsors, had sat down on his right and his left, which very nearly concealed the presence of this new-comer. Nobody having been informed, the Clerk of the Parliament had read the various documents concerning the new lord, in a low voice, and one might almost say, whispered them, and the Lord-Chancellor had proclaimed his admission, in the midst of what is called "general inattention," in the reports. Everybody was

talking. There was that peculiar buzzing in the House, during which assemblies do all sorts of twilight actions, which, later on, astonish them very much.

Gwynplaine had sat down silently and bareheaded, between the two old peers, Lord Fitzwalter and Lord Arundel.

We must add that Barkilphedro, fully informed, like the spy he was, and determined to succeed in his machinations, had, in a certain measure, attenuated the deformity of Lord Fermain Clancharlie in his official statements in the presence of the Lord-Chancellor, by emphasizing the circumstance, that Gwynplaine could, at will, suppress the laughing effect, and bring back his disfigured face to seriousness. Perhaps Barkilphedro had even exaggerated this faculty. Besides, from the aristocratic point of view, what did it signify? Was not Lord William Cowper, the legist, the author of the maxim: *In England, the restoration of a peer is more important than the restoration of a king?* There is no doubt that beauty and dignity should be inseparable; it is a pity for a lord to be deformed, and it is an outrage on the part of fate; but, we must repeat the question, wherein does it diminish his right? The Lord-Chancellor took precautions, and was right to take them, but, on the whole, with or without precautions, who could

prevent a peer from entering the House of Lords? Are not nobility and royalty superior to deformity and infirmity? Had not a wild beast's cry, been as hereditary as the peerage itself, in the old family which became extinct in 1347, of the Cumins, Earls of Buchan, to such a degree, that it was by this tiger's cry that the peer of Scotland was recognized? Did the hideous blood spots on his face, prevent Cæsar Borgia from being Duke of Valentinois? Did blindness prevent John of Luxembourg from being King of Bohemia? Did being hump-backed, prevent Richard III. from being King of England? Looking clearly to the bottom of things, it would seem, that infirmity and ugliness, accepted with haughty indifference, far from opposing grandeur, affirm and prove it. Nobility has such majesty, that deformity does not disturb it. This is the other aspect of the question, and is not the least important one. As will be seen, nothing could prevent Gwynplaine's admission, and the Lord-Chancellor's prudent precautions, useful from the inferior point of view of tactics, were mere luxuries, from the superior point of view of the aristocratic principle.

On entering, according to the instructions he had received from the King-at-Arms, and which the two sponsor lords had repeated, he had saluted "the royal chair."

So it was over. He was a lord.

This elevation, under the radiance of which he had all his life long seen his master, Ursus, bow down with dread, this prodigious summit, was under his feet.

He was in the dazzling and dark place of England.

The old peak of the feudal world, stared at for six centuries by Europe and history. Fearful halo around a world of darkness.

His entrance into this halo had taken place. Irrevocable entrance.

He was at home there.

As much at home in his seat, as the King was, in his.

He was there, and nothing, henceforward, could prevent his having been there.

This royal crown which he saw under that dais, was the sister of his own crown. He was the peer of that throne.

Facing majesty, he was the peerage. Less, but like.

What was he yesterday? A player. What was he to-day? A prince.

Yesterday, nothing. To-day, everything.

Abrupt confrontations of misery and power, meeting face to face, in the depths of mind in one destiny, and suddenly becoming the two halves of a conscience.

Two spectres, adversity and prosperity,

taking possession of the same soul, and each one drawing it towards itself. Pathetic division of an intelligence, of a will, a brain, between those two hostile brothers; the poor phantom and the rich phantom. Abel and Cain in the same man.

LORDLY GOSSIP

The benches of the House gradually filled. The lords began to come. The question of the day, was the bill increasing the annual income of George of Denmark, Duke of Cumberland, the Queen's husband, by one hundred thousand pounds sterling. Besides, it had been announced that divers bills approved by Her Majesty, were to be brought to the House, by the Commissioners of the Crown empowered and charged to sanction them; which raised the meeting to a royal session. The peers all wore their parliamentary robes over their court, or ordinary dress. This robe, similar to the one worn by Gwynplaine, was the same for all, except that the dukes had five bands of ermine with gold borders, the marquises four, the earls and the viscounts three, and the barons two. The lords entered in groups. They had met in the passages, and kept up the dialogues begun there. Some came alone. The costumes were solemn, but the attitudes

were not; nor were their words. All, on entering, bowed to the throne.

The peers flowed in. This filing in of majestic names, proceeded with but little ceremony, the public being absent. Leicester came in and shook Lichfield's hand; then Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough and Monmouth, Locke's friend, at whose suggestion he had proposed recasting the coinage; then Charles Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, listening to Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke; then Dorme, Earl of Caërnarvon; then Robert Sutton, Baron Lexington, son of that Lexington who had advised Charles II. to drive away Gregorio Leti, the historiographer, who had dared to want to be an historian; then Thomas Bellasyse, Viscount Falconberg, the handsome old man; the three cousins Howard, came together: Howard, Earl of Bindon, Bower-Howard, Earl of Berkshire, and Stafford-Howard, Earl of Stafford; then John Lovelace, Baron Lovelace, whose peerage dying out in 1736 permitted Richardson to introduce Lovelace in his book, and to create a type under this name. All these personages, celebrated in various ways in politics or war, and several of whom honor England, were laughing and talking. It was seeing History, in undress costume, as it were.

In less than half an hour, the House was nearly full. This was very easy to understand, the sitting being a royal one. What was not so easy to explain, was the liveliness of the conversations. The House, so drowsy, just a while before, was now buzzing like a hive of agitated bees. What had awakened it, was the arrival of the tardy lords. They brought news. Strange fact, the peers who at the opening of the session, had been in the House, did not know what had happened there, while those who had not been present, knew it.

Several lords had come from Windsor.

For some hours past Gwynplaine's adventure had been bruited about. A secret is a net; let but one mesh break, and the whole thing tears apart. Ever since morning, in consequence of the incidents related above, all this story of a peerage found on a strolling player's stage, and of a mountebank recognized as a lord, had made a sensation at Windsor in the royal private apartments. Princes had talked of it, then the lackeys. The event had spread from the court to the town. Events have weight, and the law of the square of velocity, can be applied to them. They fall upon the public and work themselves down, and into, it, with unheard-of rapidity. At seven o'clock, no one in London had wind of this story. At eight o'clock,

Gwynplaine was the talk of the town. Only the lords, who had been so punctual as to come before the opening of the session, were ignorant of the case; not having been in town, where the whole thing was being told, and, having been in the House, where they had not noticed anything. Whereupon, as they were quietly seated on their benches, they were apostrophized by the excited new-comers.

"Well!" said Francis Brown, Viscount Mountacute, to the Marquis of Dorchester.

"What?"

"Is it possible?"

"What?"

"The Laughing Man!"

"Who is the Laughing Man?"

"Don't you know the Laughing Man?"

"No."

"He's a clown. A boy at the fair. He has the extraordinary kind of face that people went to see for a penny. A mountebank."

"Well, what of it?"

"You have just received him here as peer of England."

"You are the Laughing Man now, my Lord Mountacute."

"I am not laughing, my Lord Dorchester."

And Viscount Mountacute, made a sign to the Clerk of the Parliament, who rose from his woolsack and confirmed the fact of the

admission of the new peer, to their lordships, adding the details.

"How very strange!" said Lord Dorchester. "I was talking to the Bishop of Ely."

The young Earl of Annesley addressed old Lord Eure, who had but two years to live, for he was to die in 1707.

"My Lord Eure?"

"My Lord Annesley?"

"Did you know Lord Linnæus Clancharlie?"

"A man of former days? Yes."

"Who died in Switzerland?"

"Yes. We were related."

"Who had been a Republican under Cromwell, and remained a Republican under Charles II.?"

"Republican? Not a bit of it. He was sulking. It was a personal quarrel between the King and himself. I hold it from trustworthy authority, that Lord Clancharlie would have rallied to the King's cause, if they had given him the office of Lord-Chancellor, which was given to Hyde."

"You surprise me, my Lord Eure. I was told that this Lord Clancharlie was an honest man."

"An honest man? Is there such a thing? Young man, there is no such thing as an honest man."

"But Cato?"

"You believe in Cato, do you?"

"But Aristides?"

"They served him right to banish him."

"But Sir Thomas More?"

"They served him right when they cut his throat."

"So in your opinion Lord Clancharlie . . . "

"Was of the same kind. Besides a man who remains in exile, is absurd."

"He died there."

"He was disappointed in his ambition. I should say I did know him! I was his best friend."

"Do you know, Lord Eure, that he married in Switzerland?"

"I know something about it."

"And that he had a lawful son by that marriage?"

"Yes; who died."

"Who is living."

"Living!"

"Living."

"It is impossible."

"Fact. Proved. Authenticated. Confirmed. Registered."

"Then that son will inherit the peerage of Clancharlie?"

"He is not going to inherit it."

"Why?"

"Because he has inherited it. It is done."

"Done?"

"Turn your head, Lord Eure. He is sitting behind you on the barons' benches."

Lord Eure turned around; but Gwynplaine's face was hidden beneath his forest of hair.

"Really!" said the old man, seeing only his hair. "And he has already adopted the new fashion. He does not wear a wig."

Grantham accosted Colepepper.

"There's a fellow who's been fooled!"

"Who's that?"

"David Dirry-Moir."

"Why so?"

"He's no longer a peer."

"How's that?"

And Henry Auverquerque, Earl of Grantham, told John, Baron Colepepper, the whole "anecdote;" the drifted bottle carried to the Admiralty, the Comprachicos' parchment, the *jussu regis*, countersigned *Jeffreys*, the confrontation in the torture vault at Southwark, the acceptance of all these facts by the Lord-Chancellor and the Queen, the taking of the Test Oath, in the glazed recess, and finally, the admission of Lord Fermain Clancharlie at the beginning of the sitting,—and both made efforts to distinguish the much talked-of face of the new lord, between Lord Fitzwalter and

Lord Arundel, but without succeeding any better than Lord Eure and Lord Annesley.

Gwynplaine, moreover, either by chance, or by the design of his sponsors, forewarned by the Lord-Chancellor, was placed in enough shadow to escape curiosity.

"Whereabouts? Where is he?"

This was the exclamation of every one on coming in, but no one succeeded in seeing him well. Some, who had seen Gwynplaine at the Green-Box, were devoured by curiosity, but lost their pains. Just as it sometimes happens, that a young girl is prudently intrenched in a group of dowagers, so Gwynplaine was, as it were, enveloped in several layers of infirm and indifferent old lords. Worthy folks who have the gout, have very little sympathy with other people's stories.

Copies of a letter, three lines long, which, it was affirmed, the Duchess Josiana had written to the Queen, her sister, in reply to the injunction made by Her Majesty, to marry the new peer, the legitimate heir of Clancharlie, Lord Fermain, were passed from hand to hand. This letter was worded as follows:

"Madam:

"I like this arrangement just as well. I can have Lord David for my lover."

Signed: *Josiana.* This note, genuine or a forgery, met with enthusiastic success.

A young lord, Charles of Okehampton, Baron Mohun, who belonged to the faction of those who wore no wigs, read it, and re-read it with delight. Lewis of Duras, Earl of Feversham, an Englishman who had a Frenchman's wit, looked at Mohun and smiled.

"Well!" exclaimed Lord Mohun, "There's the woman I should like to marry!"

And the neighbors of the two lords overheard this dialogue, between Duras and Mohun.

"Marry the Duchess Josiana, Lord Mohun!"

"Why not?"

"The deuce!"

"A fellow would be happy!"

"Several fellows would."

"Aren't there always several?"

"Lord Mohun, you are right. As regards women, we all have one another's leavings. Who has ever had a beginning?"

"Adam, perhaps."

"Not even he."

"True, there was Satan!"

"My dear fellow," said Lewis of Duras, in conclusion, "Adam only lent his name. Poor dupe. The whole human race has been

loaded on him. Man was begotten on woman by the devil."

Hugh Cholmondeley, Earl of Cholmondeley, a great jurist, was being interrogated from the Bishop's bench by Nathaniel Crew, who was doubly a peer; a temporal peer, being Baron Crew, and a spiritual peer, being Bishop of Durham.

"Is it possible?" said Crew.

"Is it regular?" said Cholmondeley.

"The investiture of this new comer, was made outside of the House," resumed the bishop, "but it is stated that there are precedents."

"Yes. Lord Beauchamp, under Richard II. Lord Chenay, under Elizabeth."

"And Lord Broghill under Cromwell."

"Cromwell does not count."

"What do you think of all this?"

"Several things."

"My Lord Earl of Cholmondeley, what will be the rank of this young Fermain Clancharlie in the House?"

"My Lord Bishop, the republican interruption having displaced the ancient order of precedence, Clancharlie is now placed between Barnard and Somers, in the peerage; which would, in a case of calling for opinions, in turn, permit Lord Fermain Clancharlie to be the eighth to speak."

"Really! A market-place mountebank!"

"The incident, in itself, does not surprise me, my Lord Bishop. Such things happen. More surprising ones, than this, occur. Was not the War of the Roses predicted by the sudden drying up of the river Ouse in Bedfordshire, on the 1st of January, 1399! Now, if a river can become dry, a lord may fall into a servile condition. Ulysses, King of Ithaca, followed all sorts of trades. Fermain Clancharlie remained a lord under his player's costume. The baseness of the garb, does not touch the nobility of the blood. But the taking of the test and the investiture outside the House, although strictly legal, may give rise to objections. I am of opinion, that it will be necessary to come to an understanding on the question of knowing whether there would be cause for questioning the Lord-Chancellor in a Privy Council, later on. We shall see in a few weeks what is to be done!"

And the Bishop added:

"It is no matter. It is an adventure such as has not been seen since Earl Gesbodus' time."

Gwynplaine, the Laughing Man, Tadcaster Inn, the Green-Box, *Chaos Conquered*, Switzerland, Chillon, the Comprachicos, exile, mutilation, the Republic, Jeffreys, James II., the *jussu regis*, the bottle opened at the

Admiralty, the father, Lord Linnæus, the lawful son, Lord Fermain, the bastard son, Lord David, the probable conflicts, the Duchess Josiana, the Lord-Chancellor, the Queen,—all this ran from bench to bench. Whispering is like a train of gunpowder. They sifted every detail. The whole adventure formed an immense murmur through the House. Gwynplaine, from the depths of the well of reverie in which he was plunged, vaguely heard this buzzing, without knowing that it was about him.

However he was strangely watchful, but watchful at the depths, not at the surface. Excess of attention turns to isolation.

Buzzing talk in the House, no more hinders a session from going on, than dust on a troop, hinders it from marching. The judges, who are merely simple spectators in the Upper House, and only able to speak when questioned, had seated themselves on the second woolsack, and the three Secretaries of State, on the third. The heirs to peerages were in great numbers in their compartment, which was at once, within and without the House, back of the throne. The minor peers were on their special bench. In 1705, there were not less than twelve of these little lords: Huntingdon, Lincoln, Dorset, Warwick, Bath, Burlington, Derwentwater, destined to a

tragic death, Longueville, Lonsdale, Dudley and Ward, and Carteret, which made a group of little fellows, eight of whom were earls, two viscounts, and two barons.

On the three rows of benches, within the enclosure, every lord had gone back to his seat. Nearly all the bishops were present. The dukes were numerous, beginning with Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and ending with George Augustus, Electoral Prince of Hanover, Duke of Cambridge, the junior in date, and consequently the junior in rank. All were in order, according to precedence: Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, whose grandfather had given shelter at Hardwick, to Hobbes when he was ninety-two; Lennox, Duke of Richmond; the three Fitz-Roys, the Duke of Southampton, the Duke of Grafton, and the Duke of Northumberland; Butler, Duke of Ormond; Somerset, Duke of Beaufort; Beauclerk, Duke of Saint Albans; Paulett, Duke of Bolton; Osborne, Duke of Leeds; Wriotheseley Russell, Duke of Bedford, who had for his battle-cry and motto: *Che sarà sarà*, that is to say, the acceptance of events; Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham; Manners, Duke of Rutland, and the others. Neither Howard, Duke of Norfolk, nor Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, attended the sitting, being Catholics; nor Churchill, Duke of

Marlborough—our Malbrouck—who was at the wars and beating the French, just then. There were no Scotch dukes at that time; Queensberry, Montrose and Roxburgh not having been admitted till 1707.

VI.

THE HIGH AND THE LOW

Suddenly, there was a bright light in the House. Four door-keepers came and set four tall candelabra, filled with wax candles, on each side of the throne. The throne, thus lighted up, appeared in a sort of luminous purple. Empty, but august. The Queen herself upon it, would not have added much to it.

The Usher of the Black Rod, entered, with his wand raised, and said:

"Their Lordships, Her Majesty's Commissioners."

All the hum of conversation ceased.

A clerk, in wig and gown, appeared at the great door, bearing a cushion embroidered with fleurs-de-lys, on which there were parchments. These parchments were bills. From each of these, there hung by a silken tress, the bill or bull, sometimes made of gold, which causes laws to be called *bills*, in England, and *bulls*, in Rome.

Following the clerk, there were three men in peers' robes, with their plumed hats on.

These men were the Royal Commissioners. The first was the Lord High Treasurer of England, Godolphin; the second was the Lord-President of the Council, Pembroke; the third was the Lord of the Privy Seal, Newcastle.

They walked in single file according to the precedence, not of their titles, but of their office—Godolphin at the head, Newcastle, the last, although a duke.

They reached the bench in front of the throne, bowed to the royal chair, took off and replaced their hats, and sat down on the bench.

The Lord-Chancellor looked at the Usher of the Black Rod, and said:

"Summon the Commons to the Bar."

The Usher of the Black Rod left the Hall.

The clerk, who was a clerk of the House of Lords, placed the cushion, on which the bills lay, on the table, within the square of the woolsacks.

There followed an interruption, which lasted several minutes. Two door-keepers placed a stool, raised on three steps, before the bar. This stool was of scarlet velvet, on which gilt nails outlined a fleur-de-lys design.

The great door which had been closed, was opened again; and a voice cried:

"The faithful Commons of England."

It was the Usher of the Black Rod announcing the other half of Parliament.

The lords put on their hats.

The members of the Commons came in, preceded by the Speaker, all bare-headed.

They stopped at the bar. They were in ordinary dress—the greater part in black, wearing swords.

The Speaker, the Right Honorable John Smyth, Esquire, member for the borough of Andover, got up on the stool which was at the centre of the bar. The Speaker of the Commons wore a long black satin gown, with flowing sleeves, which were slashed, and trimmed with gold-braid frogs both front and back, and a somewhat smaller wig than the Lord-Chancellor. He was majestic, but inferior.

All the Commons, Speaker and members, remained waiting, standing and bare-headed, before the peers, who were seated, with their hats on.

Among the Commons, could be seen the Chief-Justice of Chester, Joseph Jekyll, besides three of Her Majesty's Sergeants-at-Law, Hooper, Powys and Parker, and James Montagu, Solicitor-General, and the Attorney-General, Simon Harcourt. With the

exception of a few baronets and knights, and nine lords by courtesy, Hartington, Windsor, Woodstock, Mordaunt, Granby, Scudamore, Fitz-Harding, Hyde and Berkeley, sons of peers and heirs to peerages, all the rest were of the people. A sort of dark, silent crowd.

When the noise of the steps of all this entry had died away, the Crier of the Black Rod, said:

"Oyez!"

The Clerk of the Crown rose. He took, unfolded, and read the first of the parchments on the cushion. It was a message from the Queen naming three commissioners, to represent her in her Parliament, with power to sanction bills, to wit: . . .

Here the clerk raised his voice.

"Sydney, Earl Godolphin."

The clerk bowed to Lord Godolphin. Lord Godolphin raised his hat. The clerk continued:

"Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery."

The clerk bowed to Lord Pembroke. Lord Pembroke touched his hat. The clerk resumed:

"John Hollis, Duke of Newcastle."

The clerk bowed to Lord Newcastle. Lord Newcastle nodded his head.

The Clerk of the Crown sat down. The Clerk of the Parliament rose. His under-clerk, who was on his knees, rose behind him. Both facing the throne, and turning their backs to the Commons.

There were five bills on the cushion. These five bills, passed by the Commons and approved by the Lords, awaited the royal sanction.

The Clerk of the Parliament read the first bill.

It was a bill passed by the Commons, which charged the State with the embellishments made by the Queen at her residence of Hampton-Court, and which amounted to a million sterling.

The reading over, the clerk bowed profoundly to the throne. The under-clerk repeated the bow more profoundly still, then turning his head half-way towards the Commons, said:

"The Queen accepts your bounty, and wills it so."

The clerk read the second bill.

It was a law condemning to imprisonment and fine, whoever should evade service in the trainbands. The trainbands (a troop which could be trained or drawn wherever wanted) formed that citizen militia, which serves gratis, and which, under Elizabeth, at the approach

of the Armada, had furnished one hundred and eighty-five thousand foot-soldiers and forty thousand horsemen.

The two clerks made another bow to the royal chair; after which the under-clerk, turning them his profile, said to the House of Commons:

"The Queen wills it."

The third bill increased the tithes and prebends of the bishopric of Litchfield and Coventry, which is one of the richest prelacies of England, granting an annual income to the Cathedral, augmenting the number of canons, and swelling the list of deans and benefices, "in order to provide," said the preamble, "for the needs of our holy religion." The fourth bill added new taxes to the budget: one on marbled paper; one on hackney-coaches, fixed at the number of eight hundred in London, and taxed fifty-two shillings a year each; one on barristers, attorneys and solicitors, of forty-eight shillings per head, a year; one on tanned hides, "notwithstanding," said the preamble, "the complaints of workers in leather;" one on soap, "notwithstanding the protests of the City of Exeter and of Devonshire, where much serge and cloth is made;" one on wine, of four shillings a cask; one on flour; one on barley and hops; and one renewed the taxes on tonnage, varying

from six francs per ton, for vessels coming from the West, to eighteen francs for those coming from the East, for four years; *because the needs of the State*, said the preamble, *must be considered before the remonstrances of commerce.* And finally, the bill, declaring the ordinary poll-tax already raised, insufficient for the current year, concluded by an additional general tax for the whole kingdom, of four shillings or forty-eight French sous per head, mentioning that those who refused to take the new oaths to the Government, should pay twice the tax. The fifth bill, forbade the admission of any patient to the hospital unless he deposited a pound sterling, on entering, in order to pay for his burial, in case of death. The last three bills, like the first two, were, one after the other, sanctioned and made laws by a bow to the throne, and the under-clerk's four words: "The Queen wills it," said over his shoulder, to the Commons.

Then the under-clerk knelt down again before the fourth woolsack, and the Lord-Chancellor said:

"Let it be done, as is desired."

This ended the royal session.

The Speaker, bent himself double before the Chancellor, got down from the stool backwards, drawing aside his gown, behind

him; the Commons bowed down to the very ground, and while the Upper House resumed the interrupted business of the day, without paying any attention to all these bows and salutations, the Lower House departed.

VII.

STORMS OF MEN WORSE THAN OCEAN STORMS

The doors closed again; the Usher of the Black Rod came back; the Lord Commissioners left the State bench, and took their seats at the head of the dukes' bench, in their official seats, and the Lord-Chancellor addressed the House:

"My Lords: the House having deliberated for several days on the bill which proposes to increase the annual allowance of His Royal Highness, the Prince, Her Majesty's Consort, by one hundred thousand pounds sterling, and the debate having been exhausted and closed, the House will now proceed to vote. The vote will be taken, according to custom, beginning with the puisné of the bench of barons. Each lord, when his name is called, will rise, and reply *content* or *non-content*, and will be at liberty to state the reasons for his vote, if he think fit to do so. Clerk, take the vote."

The Clerk of the Parliament standing up, opened a large folio raised on a gilded desk; this was the Book of the Peerage.

The puisné of the House of Lords at this time, was Lord John Hervey, created baron and peer in 1703, from whom the Marquises of Bristol are descended.

The clerk called:

"My Lord John, Baron Hervey."

An old man in a blonde wig rose, and said:

"Content."

Then he sat down again.

The under-clerk registered the vote.

The clerk went on:

"My Lord Francis Seymour, Baron Conway of Killultagh."

"Content," murmured, half-rising, an elegant young man with a face like a page, who had no idea that he was to be the grandfather of the Marquises of Hertford.

"My Lord John Leveson, Baron Gower," resumed the clerk.

This baron, from whom the Dukes of Sutherland were to descend, rose, and as he took his seat again, said:

"Content."

The clerk continued:

"My Lord Heneage Finch, Baron Guernsey."

The ancestor of the Earls of Aylesford, not less youthful and not less elegant than the ancestor of the Marquises of Hertford, justified his motto *Aperto vivere voto*, by the loud tone of his consent.

"Content," he cried.

While he was taking his seat, the clerk called the fifth baron:

"My Lord John, Baron Granville."

Rising, and immediately resuming his seat, Lord Granville of Potheridge, whose heirless peerage was to become extinct in 1709, replied: "Content."

The clerk passed to the sixth:

"My Lord Charles Mountague, Baron Halifax."

"Content," said Lord Halifax, bearer of a title which had become extinct in the Saville, and was to become extinct, in the Mountague family. Mountague is distinct from Montagu and Mountacute.

And Lord Halifax added:

"Prince George has an endowment as the Consort of Her Majesty, he has another as Prince of Denmark, another as Duke of Cumberland, and another as Lord High Admiral of England and Ireland, but he has none as Commander-in-Chief. That is an injustice. This irregularity must be put an end to, in the interests of the English people."

Then Lord Halifax sounded the praises of the Christian religion, censured papistry and voted the subsidy.

Lord Halifax once reseated, the clerk resumed:

"My Lord Christopher, Baron Barnard."

Lord Barnard, from whom the Dukes of Cleveland were to descend, rose as his name was called.

"Content."

And he was somewhat slow in taking his seat again, as he wore a lace neck-band which was worth noticing. Yet, for all that, Lord Barnard was a worthy gentleman and a valiant officer.

While Lord Barnard was taking his seat, the clerk, who was reading by rote, hesitated a little. He readjusted his spectacles, and bent over the register with increased attention, then lifting up his head, he said:

"My Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville."

Gwynplaine rose.

"Non-content," said he.

Every head turned. Gwynplaine was standing. The sheaves of candles placed each side of the throne lighted up his face vividly, and made it stand out in the vast dim hall, with the relief that a mask would have against a background of smoke.

Gwynplaine had made that effort over himself, which, as will be remembered, was possible for him, in extreme cases. By a concentration of will-power, equal to that which would be needed for taming a tiger, he had succeeded in bringing a serious look over the fatal grin on his face, for a time: at that moment, he was not laughing. It could not last long; all disobedience to whatever is our law, or our fatality, is short; sometimes the water of the sea resists gravitation, swells into a waterspout and makes a mountain, but only on condition of falling back again. This was Gwynplaine's struggle. For an instant, which he felt to be a solemn one, by a prodigious intensity of will, but not for much longer than a flash of lightning, he had cast the dark veil of his soul over his brow; he held his incurable laugh in suspense; he had withdrawn joy from that face which had been carved upon him. He was merely frightful.

"Who is this man?" was the cry.

An indescribable shudder ran along all the benches. That forest of hair, those dark hollows under the eyebrows, that deep look of an eye which could not be seen, the wild modeling of that head mingling light and shadow so hideously, all this was surprising. It went beyond everything. It had been useless to talk of Gwynplaine; seeing him, was awful.

Even those who had expected it, had not expected this. Try to fancy that on the mountain reserved for the gods, at a festival on a serene evening, with the whole group of the all-powerful ones gathered together, that the face of Prometheus, all mangled by the vulture's beak, should suddenly appear like a bloody moon on the horizon. Olympus perceiving Caucasus! What a vision! Old and young, open-mouthed with horror, stared at Gwynplaine.

An old man, revered by the whole House, who had seen many men and many things, and who was to be created a duke, Thomas, Earl of Wharton, rose affrighted.

"What does this mean?" he cried. "Who introduced this man in the House of Lords? Let that man be put out."

And addressing Gwynplaine haughtily:

"Who are you? Whence do you come?"

Gwynplaine replied:

"From the yawning abyss."

And folding his arms, he looked at the lords.

"Who I am? I am Misery. My Lords, I have something to say to you."

There was a shudder and silence. Gwynplaine went on:

"My Lords, you are loftily placed. It is well. We must believe that God has his reasons for this. You have power, opulence, joy,

the sun always motionless at your zenith, unbounded authority, undivided enjoyment, an immense oblivion of all others. So be it. But there is something beneath you. Above you, too, perhaps. My Lords, I come to tell you news. The human race exists."

Assemblies are like children; incidents are their Jumping-Jack boxes, and they both like, and fear, them. Sometimes it seems as if a spring were touched, and a devil started out of a hole. It was so with Mirabeau in France, who was disfigured too.

Gwynplaine at this moment, felt a strange elevation going on within himself. A group of men to whom one speaks, becomes a tripod. One is, as it were, standing on a pinnacle of souls. Under one's heel there is a quivering of human entrails. Gwynplaine was no longer the man, who, the preceding night had been almost mean, for an instant. The fumes of the sudden elevation, which had confused him, had grown lighter and become transparent, and there where Gwynplaine had been seduced by vanity, he now saw a duty. That which had at first lessened, now raised him. He was illuminated by one of those great lightning flashes which are produced by duty.

On all sides around Gwynplaine there arose cries of:

"Hear! Hear!"

He, however, tense and superhuman, still succeeded in keeping the severe and mournful contraction upon his face, under which his grin reared, like a wild horse, ready to run away. He continued :

"I am he who comes from the depths. My Lords, you are the great and the rich. That is perilous. You take advantage of darkness. But take care, there is a great power, dawn. Daybreak cannot be conquered. It will come. It is coming. The irresistible ray of daylight is within it. And who will hinder that sling from hurling the sun into the sky? The sun, is Man's Right. You—you are Privilege. You may well be afraid. The real master of the house is going to knock at the door. Who is the father of privilege? Chance. And who is his son? Abuse. Neither Chance nor Abuse are firm or enduring. Both of them have an evil morrow. I come to warn you. I come to denounce your own happiness to you. It is made of the misery of others. You have all, and this *all* is composed of the nothing of the others. My Lords, I am the hopeless advocate, and I plead a lost cause. God Himself will gain this cause. I am nothing but a voice. The human race is a mouth, and I am its cry. You shall hear me. I come to open before you, Peers of England, the great assizes of the

people; that sovereign, who is the victim; that convict, who is the judge. I bend beneath the weight of what I have to say. Where shall I begin? I do not know. I have gathered my enormous, scattered brief in the vast diffusion of suffering. What am I to do with it now? It overwhelms me, and I cast it pell-mell before you. Did I foresee this? No. You are astonished, so am I. Yesterday I was a mountebank, to-day I am a lord. Mysterious play. Of whom? Of the Unknown. Let us all tremble. My Lords, all the azure is on your side. Of all the immense universe, you see only the holiday; learn that there are shadows. Among you I am called Lord Fermain Clancharlie, but my real name is a poor man's name, Gwynplaine. I am a poor wretch, cut out of the stuff of which great ones are made, by a King; for such was his good pleasure. That is my story. Many among you, knew my father, I never knew him. He is near you by his feudal side, and I cling to him by his exiled side. What God has done, is well done. I was cast into the abyss. For what end? So that I might see its depths. I am a diver, and I bring back the pearl, Truth. I speak, because I know. You shall hear me, my Lords. I have felt. I have seen. Believe me, most fortunate gentlemen, suffering is not a mere word.

Poverty—I grew up in it; Winter—I have shivered in it; Famine—I have tasted it; Contempt—I have endured it; the Plague—I have had it; Shame—I have drunk it. And I shall vomit it all before you, and the vomiting of all these miseries shall splash your feet and flare up. I hesitated before permitting myself to be led to this place where I am, for I have other duties, elsewhere. And my heart is not here. What has taken place within me, does not concern you. When the man whom you call the Usher of the Black Rod, came to fetch me by order of the woman whom you call the Queen, I had, for a moment, the thought of refusing. But it seemed to me that the hidden hand of God urged me this way, and I obeyed. I felt that it was necessary for me to come among you. Why? On account of my rags of yesterday. It was in order to speak to the over-fed, that God had made me mingle with the famished. Oh! have pity! Oh! that fatal world to which you think you belong, you do not know it; being so high, you are out of it. I will tell you what it is. I have experience, indeed. I have come from beneath the pressure. I can tell you what you weigh. Oh, you the masters, do you know what you are? And what you do, do you see it? No. Ah! It is all terrible. One night, one stormy night, while quite small, abandoned,

an orphan, alone in measureless creation, I made my entrance into that darkness which you call Society. The first thing I saw was the law, in the form of a gibbet; the second was wealth, was your wealth, in the form of a woman dead of cold and hunger; the third, was the future, in the form of a dying child; the fourth, was goodness, truth and justice, in the form of a vagabond having no other companion or friend, but a wolf."

At this moment, Gwynplaine seized with a poignant emotion, felt his sobs rise in his throat.

This caused him, melancholy fact, to burst out laughing.

The contagion was immediate. There was a cloud over the assemblage; it could have burst in horror; it burst in joy. Laughter, that merry insanity, seized the whole House. Meetings of sovereign men ask for nothing better than a jest. They thus avenge their seriousness.

The laughter of kings resembles the laughter of the gods; there is always a cruel point in it. The lords began to play. Sneers whetted laughter. They clapped their hands around the one who was speaking, and they insulted him. He was assailed by a pell-mell of lively interjections, a gay and bruising hail.

"Bravo, Gwynplaine!" "Bravo, Laughing Man!" "Bravo, Green-Box Snout!" "Bravo,

Tarrinzeau-field wild boar!" "You have come to give us a performance. That's good. Chatter away!" "This fellow amuses me!" "How inimitably the animal laughs!" "How d'ye do, Jumping-Jack!" "My respects to Lord Clown!" "Go on, address us!" "Do you call that thing a Peer of England?" "Go on!" "No! No!" "Yes! Yes!"

The Lord-Chancellor was ill at ease.

A deaf lord, James Butler, Duke of Ormond, making a speaking trumpet of his hand, asked Charles Beauclerc, Duke of Saint Albans:

"How did he vote?"

Saint Albans replied:

"Non-content."

"Zounds," said Ormond, "I should think so. With that face!"

A runaway crowd—and assemblages are crowds—is not an easy thing to catch.

Eloquence is a bit; and if the bit breaks, the audience makes a dash, and rears until it has thrown the orator out of the saddle. The audience hates the orator. That fact is not sufficiently well known. To tighten the bridle seems a resource, but it is not. Every orator tries it. It is instinctive. Gwynplaine tried it.

For a moment he contemplated these laughing men.

"So," he cried, "you insult misery. Silence, Peers of England! Judges, listen to

my pleading. Oh! I beseech you, have pity! Pity on whom? Pity on yourselves. Who is in danger? You are. Do you not see that you are in a balance, and that your power is on one scale, and your responsibility on the other? God is weighing you. Oh! do not laugh. Reflect. This trembling of your conscience is the oscillation of God's scales. You are not wicked. You are like other men, neither better, nor worse. You believe yourselves gods; but fall ill to-morrow, and look at your divinity shake with fever. We are all much alike. I address myself to honest minds, there are some here; I address myself to lofty intelligences, there are some here; I address myself to generous souls, there are some here. You are fathers, sons, and brothers, therefore your feelings are often touched. He among you, who looked at the awakening of his little child this morning, is good. Hearts are all alike. Humanity is nothing but a heart. Between those who oppress and those who are oppressed, there is no difference, but that of situation. Your feet tread upon heads, that is not your fault. It is the fault of the social Babel. The building is faulty, and out of line. One story crushes the other. Listen to me, and I will tell you. Oh! since you are powerful be brotherly; since you are great, be gentle. If you only knew what I have seen! Alas!

what torments there are among the lowly! The human race is in a dungeon! How many innocent ones there are among the condemned! They have no daylight, no air, no virtue; they do not hope, and yet, herein lies the danger, they expect something. Try to comprehend this distress. There are human beings who live in death. There are little girls, who at eight years of age, begin by prostitution, and who end at twenty, of old age. As for your penal severities, they are horrible. I speak somewhat at random. I do not choose. I say what comes to my mind. Not longer ago than yesterday, I, who stand before you, saw a man chained and naked, with stone weights upon his belly, expire in torture. Do you know these things? No. If you knew what was happening, not one of you would dare to be happy. Who of you has ever been to Newcastle-on-Tyne? In the mines there, you can find men, who chew coals to fill their stomach and cheat hunger. Let me tell you, that in the County of Lancaster, Ribblechester has dwindled from a town to a village, through poverty. I do not think that Prince George of Denmark, needs one hundred thousand guineas more than he has. I should prefer to receive the poor patient into the hospital, without making him pay his burial in advance. At Caërnarvon,

at Traith-maur, as well as at Traithbichan, the destitution of the poor is horrible. At Strafford, they cannot drain the marsh for want of money. The cloth factories are closed all through Lancashire. Work is at a standstill everywhere. Do you know that the herring fishermen at Harlech eat grass when fishing fails? Do you know that there are still certain lepers hunted down at Burton-Lazars, who are shot at, if they dare to leave their lairs? At Ailesbury, a town, of which one of you is the lord, famine is chronic. At Penckridge, in Coventry, where you have just endowed the Cathedral, and enriched the bishop, there are no beds in the hovels, and they dig holes in the ground for the little children to sleep in, so, that instead of beginning with the cradle they begin with the grave. I have seen these things. My lords, do you know who pay the taxes that you vote? Those who die. Alas! you are deceiving yourselves. You are on the wrong road. You are increasing the poverty of the poor, to increase the wealth of the rich. You should do the reverse. What! take from the worker to give to the idle; take from the tattered to give to the well fed; take from the poor to give to the Prince! Oh! yes, I have old republican blood in my veins. These things fill me with horror. I execrate these kings!

And how shameless the women are! I have been told a sad story. Oh! I hate Charles II.! A woman whom my father had loved, gave herself to that king, while my father was dying in exile—the prostitute! Charles II.—then James II.—after a scamp, a villain! What is there in a king? A man, a weak and puny subject of necessities and infirmities. What is the good of a king? You stuff that parasite, royalty. You make that earthworm, a boa-constrictor! You make that tape-worm, a dragon. Mercy for the poor! You are increasing the weight of taxes for the benefit of the throne. Beware of the laws you decree. Consider the suffering swarms you are crushing. Lower your eyes. Look at what is at your feet. Oh, ye great ones, there are little ones! Have pity. Yes! Pity on yourselves! For multitudes are perishing, and the low, in dying, cause the great to die. Death is a cessation which does not spare a single limb. When night comes, nobody can keep his little corner of daylight. Are you egotists? If so, save the others. The loss of the ship cannot be indifferent to any passenger. There is no shipwreck for some, unless there be engulfment for all. Oh! you may be sure of it, the yawning abyss is for us all."

The laughter grew, and became irresistible.

Besides, the very extravagance of these words was enough to amuse an assembly.

There is no more humiliating suffering, no deeper rage, than to be comic externally, while tragic internally. Gwynplaine felt this in himself. His words wished to act in one sense, his face acted in another; a frightful situation. His voice suddenly had a strident outburst.

"These men are merry! 'Tis well. Irony faces agony. The sneer mocks the death-rattle. They are all-powerful! It is possible. So be it. We shall see. Ah! I am one of them. I am also one of you, oh, ye poor! A king sold me, a poor man sheltered me. Who mutilated me? A prince. Who healed and fed me? A starving pauper. I am Lord Clancharlie, but I remain Gwynplaine. I am connected with the great, but I belong to the poor. I am among those who enjoy, and with those who suffer. Ah! this society is all false. One day true society will come. Then there will be no more lords, there will be living freemen. There will be no more masters, there will be fathers. This will be the future. No more prosternation, no more baseness, no more ignorance, no more men who are mere beasts of burden, no more courtiers, no more lackeys, no more kings, but—Light! In the meantime, I am here. I have a right, and I make use of it. Is it a right? No, not

if I use it for myself. It is, if I use it for all. I shall speak to the lords, being one myself. Oh, my brothers below, I shall tell them of your destitution. I shall stand erect, holding a handful of the people's tatters, and I shall shake the misery of the slaves upon the masters, and they, the favored and arrogant ones, will no longer be able to get rid of the remembrance of the unfortunate, nor deliver themselves, they, the princes, from the itch of the poor, and so much the worse if they are vermin, and so much the better, if they fall on lions!"

Here Gwynplaine turned towards the kneeling under-clerks, who were writing on the fourth woolsack.

"Who are those people who are on their knees? What are you doing there? get up, you are men."

This abrupt apostrophe to underlings whom a lord ought not even to notice, capped the climax of hilarity. They had shouted "Bravo!" they now shouted "Hurrah!" From clapping their hands, they passed on to stamping their feet. One might have fancied one's self in the Green-Box. Only in the Green-Box the laughter was in honor of Gwynplaine, here it exterminated him. The effort of ridicule, is to kill. Men's laughter sometimes does all it can, to assassinate.

The laughter had become a positive act of violence. There was a perfect shower of jokes. The stupidity of assemblages shows itself in trying to be clever. Their ingenious and silly sneering scatters facts instead of studying them, and condemns questions instead of answering them. An incident is an interrogation point. To laugh at it, is to laugh at the enigma. The Sphinx, which never laughs, is behind it.

Contradictory clamoring could be heard:

"Enough! Enough! More! More!"

William Farmer, Baron Leimpster, flung the same insult at Gwynplaine which Rye-Quincy had once flung at Shakespeare:

"*Histrio! mima.*"

Lord Vaughan, a sententious man, and the twenty-ninth on the barons' bench, exclaimed:

"Here we are back to the times when animals could speak. In the midst of human mouths, a bestial jaw is holding forth."

"Let us listen to Balaam's ass," added Lord Yarmouth. Lord Yarmouth had that sagacious look given by a round nose and a crooked mouth.

"The rebel Linnæus is chastised in his tomb. The son is the father's punishment," said John Hough, Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, whose prebendary Gwynplaine had slightly grazed.

"He lies," said Lord Cholmondeley, the learned legislator. "What he calls torture, is *la peine forte et dure*, and a very good punishment too. Torture does not exist in England."

Thomas Wentworth, Baron Raby, addressed the Lord-Chancellor:

"My Lord-Chancellor, adjourn the sitting!"

"No! No! No! Let him go on! He amuses us! Hurrah! Hep! hep! hep!"

Thus shouted the young lords; their gaiety rising to madness. Four of them especially, were in the full exasperation of hilarity and hatred. They were Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester; Thomas Tufton, Earl of Thanet; Viscount Hatton and the Duke of Montagu.

"Go back to your kennel, Gwynplaine!" said Rochester.

"Down with him! down with him! down with him!" shouted Thanet.

Viscount Hatton drew a penny from his pocket and flung it to Gwynplaine.

And John Campbell, Earl of Greenwich, Savage, Earl Rivers, Thompson, Baron Haversham, Warrington, Escrik, Rolleston, Rockingham, Carteret, Langdale, Banester Maynard, Hunsdon, Caërnarvon, Cavendish, Burlington, Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness,

and Other Windsor, Earl of Plymouth, applauded.

There was a tumult of Pandemonium or of the Pantheon, in which Gwynplaine's words were lost. Only the word "Beware!" could be distinguished.

Ralph, Duke of Montagu, recently graduated from Oxford, and still wearing his budding moustache, came down from the dukes' bench where he was the nineteenth in order, and went and stood with folded arms before Gwynplaine. In every blade there is one spot which cuts most sharply, and in every voice, one accent which is most insulting. Montagu's voice took that accent, and sneering in Gwynplaine's face, said:

"What do you say?"

"I am prophesying," answered Gwynplaine.

There was a fresh explosion of laughter. And under this laugh, rage continued to growl its bass.

One of the minor peers, Lionel Cranfield Sackville, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, stood up on his bench, not laughing, but grave as becomes a future legislator, and without saying a word, stared at Gwynplaine with his fresh twelve-year-old face, and shrugged his shoulders. This caused the Bishop of Saint Asaph to lean over and whisper to the Bishop

of Saint David's, who was sitting beside him, while he pointed to Gwynplaine:

"There is the madman!" and, pointing to the child: "There is the sage."

A confusion of exclamations rose above the chaos of sneering laughter: "Gorgon's face!" "What is the meaning of this occurrence?" "An insult to the House!" "What an exceptional man!" "Shame! Shame!" "Let the sitting be adjourned!" "No! let him finish!" "Speak, buffoon!"

Lord Lewis of Duras, with his hands on his hips, exclaimed:

"Oh! how good it is to laugh! It does my spleen good! I propose a vote of thanks to be expressed thus: 'The House of Lords returns its thanks to the Green-Box.'"

Gwynplaine, it will be remembered, had dreamed of a very different reception.

Whoever has climbed a perpendicular slope of crumbling sand above a dizzy depth, and has felt his point of support slip, and give way under his hands, his nails, his elbows, his knees, his feet; who falling back, instead of getting forward on that refractory steep, is a prey to the anguish of sliding down, sinking instead of climbing, going down instead of going up, increasing the calamity of drowning by the effort to reach the summit, and losing himself a little more by each movement

to escape from peril, has felt the formidable approach of the abyss, and has had the sensation of the dark chill of his fall, the open jaws yawning beneath him, in his very bones, —such a one has experienced what Gwynplaine experienced.

He felt his ascent crumble away beneath him, and his audience was the precipice.

There is always some one who sums up everything in a word.

Lord Scarsdale translated the feeling of the whole assembly in one exclamation:

"What has this monster come here for?"

Gwynplaine drew himself up, bewildered and indignant, in a sort of final convulsion. He looked at them all fixedly.

"'What I have come here for?' I come to strike terror. I am a monster, you say. No, I am the people. I, an exception? No, I am everybody. You are the exception. You are the chimera, I am the reality. I am Mankind. I am the frightful Laughing Man. What does he laugh at? At you. At himself. At everything. What is his laugh? Your crime, and his torture. That crime, he flings it in your face; that torture he spits it at you. I laugh, which means: I weep."

He stopped. They were silent. The laughter continued, but it was low. He was

led to believe that there was a certain renewal of attention. He drew a long breath, and went on.

"This laugh which is on my brow, was placed there by a king. This laugh expresses universal desolation. This laugh means hatred, an enforced silence, rage, despair. This laugh is the result of torture. This laugh is a forced laugh. If Satan bore this laugh, it would condemn God. But the Eternal does not resemble perishable mortals; being absolute, He is just; and God hates the deeds of kings. Oh! you take me for an exception! I am a symbol. Oh! all-powerful idiots that you are, open your eyes! I am the incarnation of All. I represent humanity such as its masters have made it. Man is a mutilated creature. What has been done to me, has been done to the human race. They have deformed its right, justice, truth, reason and intelligence, just as my eyes, my nostrils and my ears have been deformed; as in my case, they have put a sink of rage and grief in its heart, and a mask of satisfaction on its face. Where the finger of God had been laid, the king's claw has been driven in. Monstrous superposition. Bishops, peers, and princes, the people is the deep sufferer, who laughs on the surface. My lords, I tell you, I am the people. To-day you oppress it, to-day you

hoot me. But the future will bring an ominous thaw. That which was stone will become a wave. The appearance of solidity will change into submerging liquid. A crash, and all will be over. An hour will come when a convulsion will break down your oppression, when a roar will reply to your hooting. That hour once came,—Thou wert of it, oh, my father!—that hour of God did come, and it was called Republic, it was driven away, but it will come back. In the meantime, remember that the series of kings armed with a sword, was interrupted by Cromwell armed with an axe. Therefore tremble. The incorruptible solutions are approaching, the nails which were cut are growing again, tongues which were torn out are flying away, and become tongues of fire scattered on the winds of darkness, and howl through infinite space; the hungry show their idle teeth, and the paradises built on hells are tottering; men are suffering, suffering, suffering, and that which is above is toppling over, and that which is below is yawning; darkness demands its right to light; the damned discuss the elect; it is the people coming on, I tell you, it is man rising, the end is beginning, it is the red dawn of the catastrophe, and this is what there is in this laugh, at which you are laughing! London is a perpetual holiday. Granted. England

from one end to the other, is but one acclamation. Yes. But listen: All that you see, is I! You have festivals, they are my laugh. You have public rejoicings, they are my laugh. You have weddings, anointings and coronations, they are my laugh. You have the births of princes, they are my laugh. You have the thunder above you—that is my laugh."

How could they stand such things! The laughter burst out again, and this time it was overwhelming. Of all the lava cast out by that crater, the human mouth, the most corrosive kind, is joy. No crowd can resist the contagion of doing ill joyously. Not all executions take place on the scaffold, and men, as soon as they are gathered together, be they multitude or assembly, always have an ever ready executioner amongst them, called sarcasm. There is no torture to be compared to that of the wretch who provokes ridicule. Gwynplaine was enduring this torture. Hilarity fell upon him like stones and grape-shot. He was a rattle, and a puppet,—a Turk's-head and a target. They jumped up, they cried "Encore," they writhed with laughter. They clutched each other's neck-bands. The majesty of the place, the crimson of their robes, the chastity of the ermine, the ponderosity of their wigs, did not avail. The lords laughed; the bishops laughed; the judges laughed.

The old men's bench smoothed out its wrinkles, and the children's bench fairly wriggled. The Archbishop of Canterbury nudged the Archbishop of York. Henry Compton, Bishop of London, brother of the Earl of Northampton, held his sides. The Lord-Chancellor lowered his eyes to hide his probable laugh. And at the bar, that statue of respect, the Usher of the Black Rod, was actually laughing.

Gwynplaine, pale, had folded his arms; and surrounded by all those faces, young and old, whereon the great Homeric jubilation was radiating, in this whirlwind of clapping hands, of stamping feet and hurrahs, in that comic frenzy of which he was the centre, in that splendid overflow of hilarity, in the midst of that enormous gaiety, felt the gloom of the sepulchre within him. It was all over. He could no longer master his face which betrayed, nor his audience which insulted, him.

Never had the eternal fatal law of the grotesque riveted to the sublime, of the laugh echoing the groan, of parody riding in the same saddle with despair, of the contradiction between what one seems, and what one is—never before had this burst out with more horror. Never had a more sinister gleam lighted up the depths of human darkness.

Gwynplaine was a spectator of the final breaking down of his destiny by a burst of laughter. All that was irremediable, was in this. We may rise after falling, but not after being pulverized. This absurd and sovereign mockery reduced him to dust. Henceforward, nothing was possible. Everything depends on the surroundings. That which was a triumph at the Green-Box, was a fall and catastrophe in the House of Lords. The applause yonder, was imprecation here. He felt something like the reverse of his mask. On one side of this mask was the sympathy of the people accepting Gwynplaine; on the other, the hatred of the great, rejecting Lord Fermain Clancharlie. On one side attraction, on the other repulsion; both leading him back towards darkness. He felt himself struck from behind, as it were. Fate has treacherous blows. All will be explained hereafter, but, meanwhile, destiny is a snare, and man falls into traps. He thought he was rising, and this laughter had greeted him; apotheoses have dismal endings. There is a gloomy expression: "To be sobered." The wisdom born of drunkenness is tragic. Gwynplaine surrounded by this gay and fierce tempest, was reflecting.

When it drifts with the current, laughter grows mad. An assembly given up to mirth,

has lost its compass. They no longer knew where they were going, nor what they were doing. They had to adjourn the House.

The Lord-Chancellor, "owing to the circumstance," adjourned the rest of the vote to the next day. The House broke up. The lords bowed to the Royal Chair and went away. Their prolonged laughter could be heard as it lost itself in the corridors. Assemblies, besides their official doors, have all sorts of hidden doors in the tapestries, in the reliefs, and in the mouldings, by which they empty themselves, as a vase does by its cracks. In a little while the hall was deserted. This is done very quickly and almost without any transition. These places of tumult are immediately repossessed by silence.

Sinking into reverie leads one very far, and by dint of dreaming, one ends by being, as it were, in another planet. Gwynplaine suddenly had another sort of awakening. He was alone. The hall was empty. He had not even noticed that the sitting had been adjourned. All the peers had disappeared, even his two sponsors. Only here and there, a few of the lower officers of the House were awaiting His Lordship's departure before putting on the furniture covers, and extinguishing the lights. Mechanically he put his hat on his head, left his seat, and turned his steps

towards the great door opening on the gallery. When he crossed the opening in the bar, a doorkeeper relieved him of his peer's robe. He scarcely noticed it. An instant later he was in the gallery.

The men who were on duty there noticed with astonishment that this lord had gone out without bowing to the throne.

VIII.

WOULD BE A GOOD BROTHER IF HE WERE NOT A GOOD SON

There was no one left in the gallery. Gwynplaine crossed the glazed circular space, whence the arm-chair and the tables had been removed, and where not a trace of his investiture remained. Candelabra and chandeliers placed at certain intervals marked the way out. Thanks to this line of light, he could easily find the way he had followed when he came with the King-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod, through the suite of saloons and galleries. He met no one, except here and there some slow-paced old lord, going off heavily with his back to him.

All at once, in the silence of all those great deserted saloons, bursts of indistinct words reached him, a strange sort of nocturnal uproar in such a place. He went in the direction whence he heard the noise, and suddenly found himself in a feebly-lighted spacious vestibule, which was one of the exits of the House of Lords. A large open glass door, a flight of steps, footmen and torches could be

seen; outside there was a square, and a few coaches were waiting at the bottom of the steps.

The noise he had heard, came from here.

Inside the door, under the vestibule lantern, there was a tumultuous group, and a storm of gestures and voices. Gwynplaine in the shadow, drew near.

It was a quarrel. On one side there were ten or twelve young lords who wanted to go out, on the other, a man, with his hat on like them, erect and holding his head high, barring their passage.

Who was that man? Tom-Jim-Jack.

Some of these lords still wore their peer's robes; others had taken off their parliamentary costume, and wore their street dress.

Tom-Jim-Jack wore a plumed hat, not with white feathers like the peers, but green ones, tipped with orange; he was embroidered and braided from head to foot, with billows of ribbons and lace at his wrists and throat, and was feverishly handling the hilt of a sword which he wore on a cross-belt, with his left hand, and both this belt and the sword-sheath were embroidered with admiral's anchors.

It was he who was speaking; he was addressing all these young lords, and Gwynplaine heard the following:

"I have told you that you were cowards. You wish me to withdraw my words. I

will. You are not cowards. You are idiots. You all went against one. That is not cowardice. All right. Then it is stupidity. You were spoken to, you did not understand. Here, the old are deaf with their ears, and the young, with their intelligence. I am sufficiently one of you, to tell you truths about yourselves. This new-comer is strange, and he has uttered a heap of nonsense, I admit it; but in this nonsense there were some true things. It was confused, ill-digested, badly said, granted; he repeated, 'Do you know,' 'Do you know,' too often; but a man who was a clown at a fair, yesterday, is not bound to speak like Aristotle, or like Doctor Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Sarum. The vermin, the lions, the apostrophe to the under-clerk, all that was in bad taste. Zounds! who says anything to the contrary? It was a senseless and incoherent harangue which went all awry, but real facts came out of it here and there. It is much to speak even that way, when you have not learned the trade, and I should like to see you do it yourselves! What he told you about the lepers of Burton-Lazars is incontestably true; besides, he would not be the first man who has talked nonsense; in short, I, my lords, do not like to see many set upon one, such is my humor; and I ask your lordships' permission to take

offence. You have displeased me; I am sorry for it. As for me, I do not believe in God very much, but what would make me believe in Him, is when He performs good actions; a thing which does not happen to Him every day. Therefore I am very much obliged to this good God, if He exists, to have drawn this peer of England out of the depths of his low existence, and to have given back his inheritance to this heir; and, without caring if this will or will not suit my own affairs, I find it beautiful to see this wood-louse change into an eagle, and Gwynplaine into Clancharlie. My lords, I forbid you to be of any other opinion than mine. I regret that Lewis of Duras is not here. I should insult him with pleasure. My lords, Fermain Clancharlie has been the lord, and you have been the mountebanks. As for his laugh, that is not his fault. You have laughed at that laugh. Men do not laugh at misfortune. You are simpletons. And cruel simpletons. If you think that you too cannot be laughed at, you are mistaken; you are ugly, and you are badly dressed. My Lord Haversham, I saw your mistress the other day. She is hideous. A duchess; but a she-ape, for all that. My laughing gentlemen, I repeat, that I would just like to see you try to say four consecutive words. Many men jabber, very few speak.

You imagine that you know something because you have dragged your lazy legs to Oxford or to Cambridge, and because before you were peers of England upon the benches of Westminster Hall, you were asses on the benches of Gonvill and Caïus Colleges! I am here, and I mean to look you in the face. You have just been impudent to this new lord. He is a monster, I grant. But given up to beasts. I would rather be he, than you. I was present at the sitting, in my place, as the possible heir to a peerage, I heard everything. I had not the right to speak, but, I have the right to be a gentleman. Your mirthful airs have annoyed me. When I am not pleased, I shall go up Mount Pendlehill and pluck the cloudberry, which brings down the thunderbolt on him who pulls it up. That is why I came to await you as you came out. Talking is useful, and we have some arrangements to make. Did it strike you that you were somewhat lacking in respect towards me? My lords, I have the firm determination of killing a few of you. All of you here, Thomas Tufton, Earl of Thanet; Savage, Earl Rivers; Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland; Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester; you, Barons, Gray of Rolleston, Cary Hunsdon, Escrick, Rockingham; thou little Carteret; thou, Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness, thou

William, Viscount Hatton, and thou, Ralph, Duke of Montagu, and all the rest who wish it,—I, David Dirry-Moir, one of officers of the fleet, challenge and call you out, and I command you to provide yourselves with seconds and sponsors in all haste, and I await you face to face and breast to breast, this evening, at once, to-morrow, by day, by night, by sunlight, by torchlight, where, when, and how, it may please you, wherever there is enough room for two sword-lengths; and you would do well to examine the locks of your pistols and the points of your swords, as I intend to make your peerages vacant. Ogle Cavendish, take your precautions and think of your motto: *Cavendo tutus*. Marmaduke Langdale, thou wilt do well, like thine ancestor Gundold, to have thyself followed by a coffin. George Booth, Earl of Warrington, thou wilt never see the County Palatine of Chester, thy Cretan labyrinth, nor the high towers of Dunham Massie, again. As for Lord Vaughan, he is young enough to utter impertinences and too old to answer for them; I shall make his nephew, Richard Vaughan, member of the Commons for the Borough of Merioneth, render account for them. As for thee, John Campbell, Earl of Greenwich, I shall kill thee as Achon killed Matas; but with a fair blow, and not from

behind, as I am in the habit of showing my heart and not my back to the sword-point. And this settles it, my lords. Now, use witchcraft if you like, consult fortune-tellers, grease your skin with the ointments and drugs which make men invulnerable; hang the devil's or the virgin's sachets around your neck, I will fight you whether you be blessed or cursed, and I shall not even have you fingered all over to find out whether you have any witch-spells about you. On foot or on horseback. In the open square, if you choose, in Piccadilly, or at Charing Cross; and they shall take up the street pavement for our meeting, as they tore up the pavement of the court-yard of the Louvre, for the duel between Guise and Bassompierre. All of you, do you hear? I want everyone of you. Dorme, Earl of Caërnarvon, I'll make thee swallow my blade to the hilt, as Marolles did to Lisle-Marivaux; and then we'll see, my lord, if thou'lt laugh. Thou Burlington, who lookest like a girl with thy seventeen years, thou shalt have the choice between the lawns of thy Middlesex house, and thy beautiful garden of Londesburgh, in Yorkshire, to be buried in. I beg to inform your lordships, that it does not suit me for any one to be insolent before me. And I shall chastise you, my lords. I take it amiss that you should have scoffed at

Lord Fermain Clancharlie. He is better than you. As Clancharlie, he has nobility which you have; and as Gwynplaine, he has brains, which you have not. I make my cause of his cause, my insult, of his insult, and my wrath of your sneers. We shall see who will come out of this affair alive, for I challenge you to the death, do you understand? And with any weapon, in every manner, and you can choose the death which pleases you; and since you are boors as well as gentlemen, I will match the challenge to your qualities, and I offer you all the ways that men have of killing each other, from the sword like princes, to fists like blackguards!"

This furious rush of words was answered with a smile, by all the haughty group of young lords. "Agreed," they said.

"I choose pistols," said Burlington.

"I," said Escrick, "the ancient combat of the lists with battle-mace and dagger."

"I," said Holderness, "the duel with two knives, the long and the short, stripped to the waist, and hand to hand."

"Lord David," said the Earl of Thanet, "you are a Scot. I take the claymore."

"I, the sword," said Rockingham.

"I," said Duke Ralph, "prefer boxing. It is nobler."

Gwynplaine stepped out of the shadow.

He went towards him whom he had hitherto called Tom-Jim-Jack, and in whom he now began to discern something else.

"I thank you," said he. "But this concerns me."

Every head turned.

Gwynplaine stepped forward. He felt himself impelled towards this man whom he heard called Lord David, and who was his defender, and perhaps, even more. Lord David drew back.

"What!" said Lord David, "is it you! You here! It is very fortunate. I had a word for you as well. A little while ago, you spoke of a woman, who, after having loved Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, loved King Charles II."

"It is true."

"Sir, you have insulted my mother."

"Your mother?" exclaimed Gwynplaine. "In that case, I guessed it, we are . . ."

"Brothers," replied Lord David.

And he struck Gwynplaine in the face.

"We are brothers," he continued. "Which makes it possible for us to fight. A man can fight only with his equals. Who is more our equal than our brother? I will send you my seconds. To-morrow, we will cut each other's throats."

BOOK NINE

IN RUINS

I.

IT IS THROUGH EXCESS OF GREATNESS THAT ONE REACHES THE EXCESS OF MISERY

As midnight was striking at Saint Paul's, a man, who had just crossed London Bridge, entered the lanes of Southwark. There were no lanterns lighted; the custom at London, then being the same as at Paris, to put out the public lights at eleven o'clock, that is to say, to do away with lanterns just when they become necessary. The dark streets were deserted. No lanterns, makes few strollers. The man strode along rapidly. He was strangely dressed for walking the streets at such an hour. He wore an embroidered silk coat, a sword at his side, a hat with white feathers, and had no cloak. The watchmen who saw him pass, said: "That's a lord who has laid a wager." And they got out of his way with the respect due to a lord and a bet.

This man was Gwynplaine.

He had taken flight.

What had he come to? He did not know. The soul, as we have said, has its cyclones, frightful whirlings where sky and sea, day and night, life and death, are all mingled in a sort of unintelligible horror. We can no longer breathe reality. We are crushed by things in which we do not believe. Nothingness has become a hurricane. The firmament has grown wan. Infinite space is empty. We are surrounded by absences. We feel ourselves die. We long for a star. What was Gwynplaine experiencing? A thirst to see Dea.

He felt nothing else but that. To get back to the Green-Box and Tadcaster Inn, so noisy, so light, so full of that good, hearty laughter of the common people; to find Ursus and Homo, to see Dea again, to re-enter life!

Disillusions unbend like a bow, with ominous force, and shoot that arrow, man, towards the truth. Gwynplaine was in haste. He was coming near Tarrinzeau-Field. He no longer walked, he ran. His eyes plunged into the darkness in front of him. He made his glance precede him; an eager search for the haven on the horizon. What a moment that would be when he would see the lighted windows of Tadcaster Inn! He came out on the Bowling-Green. He turned the corner of a wall, and had the inn before him, at the other end of the field, and some distance away; for,

as will be remembered, it was the only house on the fair-ground.

He looked. Not a light. It was a black mass.

He shuddered. Then he said to himself that it was late, that the tavern was closed, that it was all very natural, that they were asleep, that he only had to wake up Nicless or Govicum, that he had to go to the inn and knock at the door. And he went to it. He did not run to it. He rushed to it.

He reached the inn, breathless. We may be in the heart of the storm, struggling in the invisible convulsions of the soul, not knowing whether we are dead or alive, and yet we have all sorts of consideration for those we love; it is by this, that true hearts are recognized. When all else is swallowed up, tenderness still floats on the surface. Not to awaken Dea suddenly, was at once Gwynplaine's chief care.

He drew near the inn making the least possible noise. He knew the little den, the old watch-dog's kennel, in which Govicum slept; this closet, next to the tap-room, had a sliding window looking on the square. Gwynplaine gently scratched the pane. All that was needed, was to wake up Govicum.

There was no movement in Govicum's bedroom. "At his age," said Gwynplaine to himself, "one sleeps soundly." He struck a

little blow with the back of his hand on the window. Nothing stirred.

He rapped more sharply, and twice. No one moved in the little den. Then, with a slight shudder, he went to the door of the inn, and knocked.

No one answered.

He thought, not without feeling the beginning of a deep chill: "Master Nicless is old, children sleep soundly and old men, heavily. Come! Harder!"

He had scratched. He had rapped. He had knocked. He struck. This recalled a distant remembrance, Weymouth, when, still quite little himself, he carried the tiny Dea in his arms.

He knocked violently, like a lord, which alas! he was.

The house remained silent.

He felt that he was becoming distracted.

He took no more precautions. He called: "Nicless! Govicum!"

At the same time he looked at the windows, to see if any candle was being lighted.

Nothing in the tavern. Not a voice. Not a sound. Not a gleam.

He went to the gate and struck it, pushed it, shook it madly, shouting: "Ursus! Homo!"

The wolf did not bark.

An icy sweat stood in drops on his forehead.

He cast his eyes around him. The night was dark, but there were stars enough to make the fair-ground distinct. He saw a mournful thing—everything had vanished. There was no longer a single booth on the Bowling-Green. The circus was no longer there. Not a tent. Not a platform. Not a cart. The thousand-voiced vagabondage which had swarmed there, had given place to some strange and wild black void. Everything was all gone.

The madness of anxiety seized him. What did it all mean? What had happened? Was there no longer any body here? Had his life crumbled in ruins behind him? What had been done to them all? Oh! Good God! He threw himself against the house like a tempest. He knocked at the low door, the gate, the windows, the shutters, the walls, with his fist, and feet, furious with fright, and with anguish. He called Nicless, Govicum, Fibi, Vinos, Ursus, Homo. He threw all clamors, all noises against that wall. At times, he stopped and listened; the house remained dumb and dead. Then, exasperated, he began again. Thumps, knocks, cries, the rattling sound of blows echoed all around. One would have said, that thunder was trying to awaken the tomb.

At a certain degree of fright, a man becomes terrible. Whoever fears everything, no longer fears anything. He even kicks the Sphinx. He attacks the Unknown. Gwynplaine renewed the tumult in every possible form, stopping, starting again, inexhaustible in shouts and calls, storming the tragic silence.

He called all those who might be there a hundred times, called every name, excepting Dea's. A precaution, which was not clear to himself, but which was instinctive even in his frenzy.

Cries and calls being exhausted, all he could do was to break in.

He said to himself: "I must get in the house. But how?" He broke a pane of glass in Govicum's closet, thrust in his hand, tearing his flesh, drew the bolt of the sash and opened the little window. He noticed that his sword was going to hinder him; he tore it off angrily, sheath, blade and belt, and threw it on the pavement. Then he hoisted himself by the projections of the wall, and although the window was narrow, he was able to get through it. He entered the inn.

Govicum's bed, vaguely visible, was in the little closet; but Govicum was not in it. If Govicum was not in his bed, it was evident that Nicless could not be in his. All the house

was dark. He felt the mysterious immobility of emptiness, and that vague horror which signifies, "There is no one here" in that gloomy interior. Gwynplaine convulsively crossed the lower room, knocking against tables, trampling on dishes, upsetting benches, overturning jugs, stepping over furniture, went to the door opening on the court, and broke it open with one blow of his knee, which tore out the latch. The door turned on its hinges. He looked in the court. The Green-Box was no longer there.

II.

THE RESIDUE

Gwynplaine left the house, and set about exploring Tarrinzeau-Field in every direction; he went wherever a platform, a tent, or a hut could have been seen, the previous day. There was nothing left. He knocked at the stalls, although he knew very well that they were not inhabited. He struck everything that looked like a window or a door. Not a voice came out of the darkness. Something like death had come there.

The ant-hill had been crushed. Some police measure had visibly been taken. There had been what in our days would be called a raid. Tarrinzeau-Field was more than deserted, it was desolate; and to its very last corner, one could feel the scratching of a savage claw. The pockets of this wretched fair-ground had been, so to speak, turned inside out, and emptied.

Gwynplaine after having ransacked everything, left the Bowling-Green, entered the

crooked streets of the end called East-point, and went towards the Thames.

He crossed some of the zigzags of that network of lanes, where there were only walls and hedges, then he felt the freshness of water in the air, heard the dull gliding of the river, and suddenly found himself before a parapet. It was the parapet of Effroc-stone.

This parapet bordered a very short and very narrow portion of quay. Under the parapet, the high wall of Effroc-stone ran down perpendicularly into the dark water.

Gwynplaine stopped at this parapet, leaned on it, clasped his head in his hands, and began to think, having this water below him.

Was he looking at the water? No. What was he looking at? The shadow. Not the external shadow, but the internal shadow.

In the melancholy nocturnal landscape to which he was paying no attention, in that exterior depth which his look did not penetrate, the outlines of spars and masts could be distinguished. Under the Effroc-stone there was nothing but the stream, but the quay sloped down stream imperceptibly, and ended at some distance off at a steep bank, alongside of which there were several vessels. Some had lately arrived, others were about to leave, but all communicated with the land by little mooring jetties, made of stone

or wood for the purpose, or by plank foot-bridges. These vessels, some moored, others anchored, were motionless. Neither speech nor footsteps were heard; sailors having the good habit of sleeping as much as they can, and of waking up only for work. If any of these vessels were about to leave during the night at high tide, no one on board was yet awake.

One could hardly see the hulls, great black blisters, and the rigging, threads mingled with ladders. It was all livid and confused. Here and there a red lantern pierced the haze.

Gwynplaine noticed nothing of all this. What he was contemplating, was his destiny.

He was musing, a distracted dreamer standing before inexorable reality.

It seemed to him as if he heard something like an earthquake behind him. It was the laughter of the lords.

That laugh—he had just come away from it. He had just come away from it, struck in the face.

Struck by whom?

By his brother.

And on leaving that laugh, with this blow upon him, taking refuge, wounded bird, in his nest, fleeing from hate and seeking love, what had he found?

Darkness.

No one.

All gone.

He compared that darkness to the dream he had had.

What a complete ruin!

Gwynplaine had just reached that sinister boundary—empty space. To find the Green Box gone, was the vanishing of the universe for him.

His very soul had just been closed up.

He reflected.

What could have happened? Where were they? They had evidently been carried off. Destiny had been a blow in the form of grandeur for him, Gwynplaine; and for them, a rebound in the form of annihilation. It was clear that he would never see them again. Precautions had been taken against that. And at the same time, they had laid hands on every one who inhabited the fair-ground, beginning by Nicless and Govicum, so that no information could be given him. Inexorable dispersion! This fearful social power, while it was pulverizing him in the House of Lords, had crushed them in their poor cabin. They were lost. Dea was lost. Lost for him. Forever. Heavenly powers! Where was she? And he had not been there to protect her!

Making conjectures about absent loved ones, is putting one's self on the rack. He

inflicted this torture on himself. At each wedge of thought which he thrust in himself, at each supposition that he made, he felt a gloomy inward groan.

Through a succession of painful ideas, he remembered the evidently fatal man, who told him that his name was Barkilphedro. This man had written something dark in his brain which now re-appeared, and it had been written with such terrible ink that now it stood in letters of fire, and Gwynplaine saw these enigmatical words, which were perfectly clear to-day, flaming in the depths of his mind. *Destiny does not open one door without shutting another!*

It was all over. The final shadows were upon him. Every man's destiny may bring him his own special end of the world. This is called despair. The soul is full of falling stars.

So this was what he had come to!

A puff of smoke had passed. He had been mingled with this smoke. It had thickened on his eyes; it had entered his brain. He had been blinded, without; and intoxicated, within. It had lasted the time it takes for a puff of smoke to pass. Then everything had cleared away, the smoke and his life with it. Awakened from that dream, he had found himself alone.

All vanished. All gone. All lost. Night. Nothingness. Such was his horizon.

He was alone.

Alone, has a synonym—Dead.

Despair is an accountant. It likes to find its sum total. Nothing escapes it. It adds up everything, and insists on every farthing. It reproaches God for his thunderbolts and his pin-pricks. It wants to know what it has to expect from Fate. It argues, weighs and calculates.

A dark external cooling, under which the molten lava continues to flow.

Gwynplaine examined himself and examined Fate.

The backward glance is a fearful summing up.

When at the top of the mountain, we look down at the precipice. When at the bottom, we look at the sky.

And we say to ourselves, "I was there."

Gwynplaine was at the very bottom of misfortune. And how quickly it had come! Hideous promptitude of misfortune. It is so heavy that one would think it slow. Not at all. It seems as if snow, being cold, should have the paralysis of winter; and, being white, the immobility of the shroud. But all that is contradicted by the avalanche!

The avalanche is snow which has become a furnace. It remains icy, yet devours. The

avalanche had enveloped Gwynplaine. He had been torn away like a rag, uprooted like a tree, flung like a stone.

He recapitulated his fall. He put questions to himself and answered them. Grief is an interrogatory. No judge is as minutely particular as conscience conducting its own trial.

What amount of remorse was there in his despair?

He wanted to know exactly, and dissected his conscience; a painful vivisection.

His absence had produced a catastrophe. Had this absence depended on him? Had he been free in all that had just happened? No! He had felt himself a captive. What was it that had arrested and detained him? A prison? No. A chain? No. What had it been then? Bird lime. He had been sunk in the mire of grandeur.

To whom has it not happened, to be apparently free, and yet to feel that his wings are hampered?

There had been something like a snare set. That which is temptation at first, ends by becoming captivity.

Nevertheless, and on this point his conscience pressed him, had he simply submitted to what had offered itself? No. He had accepted it.

It was true, that violence and surprise had in a certain measure been used against him; but he, in a certain measure, on his part, had allowed it to be done. To have allowed himself to be carried off, was not his fault; to have allowed himself to be intoxicated, had been his weakness. There had been a moment, a decisive moment, when the question had been proposed to him; this Barkilphedro had set him face to face with a dilemma, and had distinctly given Gwynplaine the opportunity of deciding his fate by a word. Gwynplaine could have said "No." He had said "Yes."

From this "yes," said in a state of mental bewilderment, all the rest had followed. Gwynplaine understood it. Bitter after-taste of his consent.

Still, for he struggled, was it so great a wrong after all, to enter upon his own rights, in his patrimony, upon his inheritance, in his house; and, as a patrician, upon the rank of his ancestors; as an orphan, to take his father's name? What had he accepted? A restitution. Made by whom? By Providence.

Then he felt a revolt. What a stupid acceptance! What a bargain he had made! What a foolish exchange! He had dealt with Providence at a loss. What! In order to have two millions of income, to have seven or

eight estates, to have ten or twelve palaces, to have mansions in town, and castles in the country, to have a hundred lackeys, and packs of hounds, and coaches, and armorial bearings, to be a judge and legislator, to be crowned and robed in purple like a king, to be a baron and a marquis, to be Peer of England—he had given up Ursus' hut and Dea's smile! For a shifting immensity in which a man is swallowed up and shipwrecked, he had given happiness! He had given the pearl for the ocean. Oh, madman! Oh, fool! Oh, dupe!

But, nevertheless, and here the objection returned to firm ground, not everything had been unwholesome in this fever of high fortune which had seized him. Perhaps there would have been selfishness in renunciation, perhaps there was duty in acceptance. Suddenly transformed into a lord, what should he have done? The complexity of events produces perplexity of mind. That is what had happened to him. His confusion was produced by duty giving its orders in contrary directions; duty in all directions at once, multiple, and almost contradictory duty. It was this confused fright which had paralyzed him, and specially during the journey from Corleone Lodge to the House of Lords, to which he had offered no resistance. What we call rising in life, is passing from a straight to an

intricate road. Where is the straight line henceforth? Towards whom is our first duty? Is it towards our nearest? Is it towards the human race? Do we not pass from the small family to the great? We rise, and we feel an increasing weight on our integrity. The higher we go, the greater we feel our obligations to be. The extension of our rights, increases our duties. We have the impression, perhaps the illusion, of several roads presenting themselves at the same time, and we think we see conscience pointing its finger to each one of them. Which shall we take? Leave them all? Stand still? Advance? Fall back? What are we to do? It is strange that duty should have cross roads. Responsibility may be a labyrinth.

And when a man embodies an idea, when he is the incarnation of a fact, when he is the symbolic man at the same time that he is the man of flesh and blood, does not the responsibility become still more perplexing? Hence, Gwynplaine's anxious docility and mute anxiety; hence his obedience when summoned to take his seat. A pensive man is often a passive man. He had even fancied that he heard the command of duty itself. Was not this admission into a place where one could discuss and oppose oppression, the realization of one of his highest aspirations? When it had

been his turn to speak, he, the fearful social sample, the living specimen of that royal pleasure under which the human race has groaned in agony for six thousand years, had he the right to refuse it? Had he the right to draw back his head from under the fiery tongue falling from on high to rest upon him?

In the dark and dizzy debate of his conscience, what had he said to himself? This: "The people are mute. I will be the mighty advocate of that silence. I will speak for the dumb. I will speak of the lowly to the great, and of the weak to the powerful. That is the aim of my destiny. God wills what He wills, and does it. Indeed, it was surprising that Hardquanonne's gourd which contained the metamorphosis of Gwynplaine into Lord Clancharlie should have floated for fifteen years on the sea, on the billows, in the surf, in the squalls and, that all this mighty rage should have done it no harm. I see why. There are destinies with secret drawers; I have the key to mine, and I open my enigma. I am predestined! I have a mission. I will be the lord of the poor. I will speak for all despairing taciturnity. I will translate the stammerings. I will translate the growlings, the howlings, the grumbling, the mutter of crowds, the badly uttered complaints, the unintelligible

voices, and all those brutish sounds which men are forced to utter by dint of ignorance and suffering. Human sounds are as inarticulate as the sound of the wind; they cry. But they are not understood; crying thus becomes equivalent to silence, and this silence disarms them. It is this forced disarmament which calls for help. I will be that help. I will be the denunciation. I will be the Word of the People. Thanks to me, they will be understood. I will be the bleeding mouth from which the gag is drawn. I will tell everything. It will be great."

Yes! It is beautiful to speak for the dumb, but speaking to the deaf, is sad. That was the second part of his experience.

Alas! he had failed.

He had failed irremediably.

This elevation in which he had believed, this high fortune, this semblance, had crumbled beneath him.

What a fall! To fall in a froth of laughter.

He thought himself strong, he, who during so many years had floated with watchful soul in the vast diffusion of suffering, he, who brought back a lamentable cry from all that gloom. He had come to dash himself to pieces on the colossal reef of the frivolity of the fortunate. He thought himself an avenger, he found himself a clown. He thought

to hurl a thunderbolt, he had only tickled. Instead of emotion he had reaped mockery. He had sobbed, they had burst into merriment. He had sunken under this merriment. Funereal submersion.

And what had they laughed at? At his laugh.

Thus, this execrable deed of violence whose trace he kept forever, this mutilation which had become a perpetual source of merriment, this grinning stigma, the supposed image of the contest of nations under their oppressors, this mask of joy made by torture, this abyss of laughter which he bore on his face, this scar signifying *jussu regis*, this attestation of the crime committed upon him by the king, the symbol of the crime committed by royalty upon the whole nation, so it was this, that triumphed over him, this overwhelmed him, and the accusation against the executioner turned into a sentence against the victim! Prodigious denial of justice. Royalty after having got the better of his father, got the better of him. The evil which had been done, served as a pretext and a motive, for the evil which remained to be done. Against whom did the lords grow indignant? Against the torturer? No. Against the tortured. On one side the throne, on the other, the people; here James II., there Gwynplaine. This confirmation

certainly brought an outrage and a crime to light. Which was the outrage? The complaint. Which was the crime? The suffering. Let misery hide and be silent; otherwise it becomes high treason. But were these men who had dragged Gwynplaine on the hurdle of sarcasm, wicked? No, they too had their fatality; they were fortunate. They were executioners without even knowing it. They were in a good humor. They had found Gwynplaine useless. He had opened his body; he had torn out his heart and his liver, he had shown his entrails, and they had shouted: "Go on with your play." Heart-breaking fact, he had laughed himself. The frightful chain tied down his soul, and prevented his thought from rising to his face. The disfiguration went even to his mind, and while his conscience was indignant, his face gave it the lie, and grinned. It was all over. He was the Laughing Man, the Caryatid of the weeping world. He was anguish petrified in hilarity, and bearing the weight of a universe of calamity, and walled forever in joviality, in irony, in the amusement of others; he shared with all the oppressed, whose incarnation he was, the abominable fatality of being a desolation which was not taken seriously; they jested with his distress; he was some indescribable enormous buffoon, the result of a frightful

condensation of misfortune, who had escaped from the galleys, been received as one of the gods, raised from the depths of the populace to the foot of the throne, mingled with the constellations, and after having amused the damned, he was amusing the elect! All that there was in him of generosity, enthusiasm, eloquence, heart, soul, fury, rage, love, inexpressible grief, ended in this—a burst of laughter! And he realized, as he had said to the lords, that this was not an exception, but that it was the normal, ordinary, universal fact, the vast sovereign fact which was so completely amalgamated with the routine of life, that it was no longer perceived. The starving wretch laughs, the beggar laughs, the convict laughs, the prostitute laughs, the orphan, to earn his living, laughs, the slave laughs, the soldier laughs, the people laugh; human society is made in such a way, that all losses, all poverty, all catastrophes, all fevers, all ulcers, all agonies, resolve themselves in one frightful grin of joy above the abyss. And this whole grimace was summed up in him. He was the thing itself. The law from above, the unknown force which governs, had willed that a visible and palpable spectre, a spectre of flesh and blood, should sum up the monstrous parody which we call the world; and he was this spectre.

Incurable destiny.

He had cried: "Mercy for the suffering!" In vain.

He had wanted to awaken pity; he had awakened horror. That is the law of the apparition of spectres.

Yet he was a man, as well as a spectre. That was his agonizing complication. Externally a spectre, internally a man. More a man, perhaps, than any other, for his double fate summed up the whole of humanity. And while he had humanity within him, he felt it to be beyond him.

There was something insurmountable in his existence. What was he? A disinherited creature? No; for he was a lord. What was he? A lord? No; for he was a rebel. He was the Light-bearer; a frightful joy-dispeller. He was not Satan, it is true, but he was Lucifer. He came ominously, torch in hand.

Ominous for whom? For the ominous. Dreadful to whom? To the dreaded. Therefore they rejected him. Enter among them? Be accepted? Never. The obstacle he had on his face was fearful, but the obstacle he had in his ideas was still more insurmountable. His words had seemed more deformed than his face. He did not think one thought which was acceptable in that world of the

great and the powerful in which one fatality had caused him to be born, and out of which another fatality had driven him. Between men and his face, there was a mask, and between society and his mind, a wall. By mingling, as a wandering mountebank, from early childhood with that vast, hardy, and robust environment which is called the masses, by saturating himself with the magnetism of multitudes, by impregnating himself with the immense human soul, he had lost in the common sense of mankind, the special sense of the reigning classes. He was an impossibility among the upper classes. He came to them all wet with the water of the well of Truth. He was fœtid with odors from the abyss. He was repugnant to those princes, perfumed with lies. To him who lives in fiction, truth is disgusting. He who thirsts for flattery, vomits reality, if he drinks it by mistake. What Gwynplaine brought was not presentable; what was it? Reason, wisdom and justice. They rejected him with disgust.

There were bishops there. He brought them God. Who was this intruder?

Opposite poles repel each other. There is no amalgamation possible. Transition is lacking. They had seen this formidable meeting without any other result than a burst of anger: all misery concentrated in one man,

face to face with all pride, concentrated in a caste.

It is useless to accuse. It is enough to state. Gwynplaine could realize the immense uselessness of his effort, in this meditation on the brink of his fate. He realized the deafness of high places. The privileged have no ear on the side toward the disinherited. Is it the fault of the privileged? No. It is their law, alas! Forgive them. To be moved, would be to abdicate. Where there are lords and princes nothing must be expected. He who is satisfied, is inexorable. For the well-fed, the famished do not exist. The fortunate ignore, and isolate themselves. On the threshold of their paradise, as well as on the threshold of Hell, there must be written: "Leave all hope behind."

Gwynplaine had just met the reception of a spectre entering the abode of the gods.

At this remembrance, all that he had within him became indignant. No; he was not a spectre, he was a man. He had told them, he had cried out to them, that he was Man.

He was not a phantom. He had palpitating flesh. He had a brain, and he thought; he had a heart and he loved; he had a soul and he hoped. To have hoped too much, that had been just the whole of his fault.

Alas! He had exaggerated hope to the point of believing in that dark and dazzling thing, called Society. He who had been shut out of it, had re-entered it.

Society had at once, from the start, directly, made its three offers and presented its three gifts, marriage, family, caste. Marriage? He had seen prostitution on its threshold. Family? His brother had struck him, and awaited him on the morrow sword in hand. Caste? It had just burst into laughter in his face; his, the patrician's, the outcast's. He was rejected almost before he was admitted, and his first three steps in that deep social shadow, had opened three chasms beneath him.

His misfortune had begun by a treacherous transfiguration! And this catastrophe had come toward him with the features of an apotheosis! "Ascend!" had signified: "Descend!"

He was a sort of reverse of Job. It was through prosperity, that adversity had come to him.

Oh, tragical human enigma! See its ambushes! As a child, he had struggled against night, and had been the stronger. As a man, he had struggled against destiny and had overthrown it. He had come out of disfigurement, all radiant, and turned misery into happiness. He had made his exile, an asylum.

A vagabond, he had struggled against space, and like the birds of heaven, had found his crumb of bread there. Wild and solitary, he had struggled against the crowd, and had made it his friend. An athlete, he had struggled against that lion, the people, and had tamed it. Poor, he had struggled against distress, he had faced the hard necessity of living, and by dint of amalgamating all the joys of the heart to misery, he had made wealth out of poverty. He had been able to believe himself the conqueror of life. Suddenly new forces had come up against him out of unknown depths, not with threats, but with caresses and smiles; Draconian and material love had appeared to him who was all penetrated with angelic love; the flesh had seized him, he who lived in the ideal; he had heard voluptuous words, which were like cries of rage; he had felt the embrace of woman's arms, which had the effect of the twinings of a viper; the illumination of truth had been succeeded by the fascination of falsehood; for it is not the flesh that is real, but the soul. Flesh is ashes, the soul is flame. The group united to him by the relationship of poverty and labor, and which was his true, natural family, had been replaced by the social family, his family by blood, but of mixed blood, and even before having entered it, he found himself

face to face with possible fratricide. Alas! he had allowed himself to be re-classed in that society of which Brantôme, whom he had not read, has said: *The son may justly challenge the father to a duel.* Fatal fortune had cried to him, "Thou art not of the crowd, thou art of the chosen!" and had opened the social ceiling above his head, like a trap in the sky, and had hauled him through this opening, and had made him loom up, wild and unexpected, in the midst of princes and rulers.

Suddenly, he had seen around him, instead of the people who applauded him, the lords who cursed him. Sad metamorphosis! Ignominious aggrandizement! Sudden spoliation of all that had been his felicity! Pillage of his life by contemptuous hootings! A tearing to pieces of Gwynplaine, of Clancharlie, of the lord, of the mountebank, of his former lot, of his new lot, by the fierce strokes of all these eagles' beaks!

What was the use of having begun life by victory over obstacles from the start? What was the use of having triumphed at first? Alas! We must be overthrown, or destiny is not complete.

Thus, half by force and half willingly, for after the Wapentake, he had had to deal with Barkilphedro, and in his abduction there had been some consent on his part, he had left

the real for the chimerical, the true for the false, Dea for Josiana, love for pride, liberty for power, poor and proud labor for opulence full of unknown responsibilities, the shade where God is, for the brilliant flames where demons are found. Paradise for Olympus!

He had bitten into the golden fruit. He was spitting out the mouthful of ashes.

Lamentable result. Rout, defeat, failure, ruin and fall; the insolent expulsion of all his hopes. Scourged by sneers, an immeasurable disillusion. What was he to do henceforth? If he looked at the morrow, what did he perceive? A naked sword whose point was at his breast, and whose hilt was in his brother's hand. He could see nothing but the hideous flash of that sword. The rest, Josiana, the House of Lords, were all behind it in a monstrous chiaroscuro full of tragic outlines.

And that brother appeared to him as both chivalrous and valiant! Alas! He had hardly had a glimpse of the Tom-Jim-Jack who had defended Gwynplaine, of the Lord David who had defended Lord Clancharlie; only just time enough to receive a blow from him and to love him.

What overwhelming blows!

Now it was impossible for him to go any further. Everything about him was crumbling into ruin. Besides, what would be the use of

it? There is nothing but weariness at the bottom of all despair.

The trial had been made, and could not be repeated.

Gwynplaine was like a gambler who had played all his trumps one after another. He had allowed himself to be dragged to the fearful gambling den. Without realizing what he was doing, for such is the subtle way in which illusions poison, he had staked Dea against Josiana, and had gained a monster. He had staked Ursus against a family, and had gained an insult. He had staked his mountebank's platform against a seat in the House of Lords; he had had acclamation, and had found imprecation. His last card had just fallen on the fatal green carpet of the deserted Bowling-Green. Gwynplaine had lost. He had nothing more to do but to pay. Pay up, unhappy wretch!

The thunder-stricken do not move much. Gwynplaine was motionless. Whoever would have seen him from afar in the shadow, straight and immovable, beside the parapet, would have thought that he saw a standing stone.

Hell, the Serpent and reverie all coil around themselves. Gwynplaine was descending the sepulchral spirals of pensive self-examination.

He was looking at the world, of which he had just had a glimpse, with that cold look

which is the final one. Marriage, but no love; family, but no fraternity; wealth, but no conscience; beauty, but no modesty; justice, but no equity; order, but no equilibrium; power, but no intelligence; authority, but no right; splendor, but no light. Inexorable balance-sheet. He made a complete circle around this final vision into which his thought had plunged. He successively examined destiny, the situation, society, and himself. What was destiny? A snare. The situation? Despair. Society? Hatred. And he himself? A victim. And from the depths of his soul he cried: Society is a stepmother. Nature is the mother. Society is the world of the body; nature is the world of the soul. One leads to the coffin, to the pine box in the grave, to worms, and ends there. The other leads to open wings, to transfiguration in the dawn, to ascension into the firmament, and there begins again.

Little by little, paroxysm took possession of him. It was a gloomy whirling. Things which are about to end, have a last flash in which everything is seen once more.

He who judges, confronts. Gwynplaine placed what society had done for him, and what had been done for him by nature, before him. How kind nature had been to him! How she, who is the soul, had succored him!

Everything had been taken from him; everything, even to his very face, and the soul had restored it all to him. All, even his face; for there was here below, a heavenly blind girl, made expressly for him, who did not see his ugliness and who saw his beauty.

And had he allowed himself to be separated from that! Was it from this adorable creature, from this heart, from this adoption, from this tenderness, from this divine blind look, the only one on earth that saw him, that he had gone away? Dea was his sister: for he felt the great celestial fraternity, the mystery which contains the whole of Heaven, between her and himself. Dea, when he was quite little, was his Virgin, for every child has a Virgin, and life always has as its beginning, a marriage of souls consummated in perfect innocence, by two little ignorant virginities. Dea was his spouse: for they had the same nest on the highest branch of the high tree of Hymen. Dea, was more yet, she was his light: without her all was void and nothingness, and for him her tresses were rays of light. What would become of him without Dea? What was he to do with that which he called himself? No part of him lived without her. How could he have lost sight of her for a moment? Oh, unfortunate creature! he had allowed a space to come in between his star and himself, and

in those dangerous unknown gravitations, space at once becomes a chasm! Where was she, the star! Dea! Dea! Dea! Dea! Alas! he had lost his light. Take away the sun, and what is the sky? Nothing but blackness. But why had all that gone away? Oh! how happy he had been! God had re-made Eden for him:—too completely, alas!—even to allowing the serpent to come back to it! But this time, the one who had been tempted, was man. He had been drawn outside, and there, frightful snare, he had fallen into the chaos of black laughter, which is Hell! Woe! Woe! How frightful all that had fascinated him had been! That Josiana, what was she? Oh! that horrible woman; almost a beast, almost a goddess! Gwynplaine was now on the reverse side of his elevation, and he saw the other side of what had dazzled him. It was funereal. That peerage was deformed, that coronet was hideous, that purple robe was dismal, those palaces were venomous, those trophies, statues, armorial bearings were equivocal, the unwholesome and treacherous air one breathed there made one mad. Oh! how brilliant the rags of the mountebank Gwynplaine seemed now! Oh! where were now the Green-Box, poverty, joy, and the sweet wandering life spent together like swallows? They never left each other, saw each other every minute, evening,

morning; at table, their elbows and their knees touched, they drank from the same glass, the sun came in by the little window, but it was only the sun, and Dea was Love. At night they felt that they were sleeping not far from each other, and Dea's dream came and hovered over Gwynplaine, and Gwynplaine's dream went mysteriously to beam on Dea! They were not quite sure when they awoke, whether they had not exchanged kisses in the azure mist of dreams. All innocence lived in Dea, all wisdom in Ursus. They roamed from town to town; they had as their viaticum and cordial, the frank loving gaiety of the people. They were vagabond angels, having enough of humanity to walk here below, and not quite enough wings to fly away. And now, all had disappeared! Where was it all? Was it possible that all that was effaced? What wind had blown upon them from the tomb? So it was all eclipsed! All lost! Alas! the deaf omnipotence which weighs upon the lowly, has all gloom at its disposal, and is capable of everything! What had been done to them? And he had not been there to protect them, to fling himself before them, to defend them, as a lord, with his title, his peerage and his sword; or as a mountebank, with his fists, and his nails! And here a bitter reflection arose, perhaps the most bitter of all. Well! No; he

could not have defended them! It was precisely he who had ruined them. It was to save him from them, him Lord Clancharlie, it was to isolate his dignity from their contact, that the infamous social omnipotence had come down so heavily upon them. The best way for him to protect them, would be to disappear, there would be no more reason for persecuting them. If he were out of the way they would be left alone. Icy opening into which his thought entered. Ah! why had he permitted himself to be separated from Dea? Was not his first duty towards Dea? To serve and defend the people? But Dea was the people! Dea was the orphan, was the blind, was humanity! Oh! What had been done to them? Cruel smart of regret! His absence had left the field free for the catastrophe. He would have shared their fate. Either he would have taken and carried them away with him, or he would have been swallowed up with them. And now what would become of him without them? Gwynplaine without Dea. Was such a thing possible? To lack Dea, was to lack everything. Ah! it was all over. That beloved group was forever hidden in irreparable disappearance. Everything was exhausted. Besides, condemned and damned as Gwynplaine was, what was the use of struggling any longer?

There was no more to expect, either from men or from Heaven. Dea ! Dea ! Where was Dea ? Lost ! What, lost ? He who has lost his soul, has but one place where he can find it—Death.

Gwynplaine, tragic and bewildered, placed his hand firmly on the parapet as on a solution, and looked at the river.

It was the third night that he had not slept. He had a fever. His ideas, which he thought clear, were confused. He felt an imperative need of sleep. He remained thus for a few moments leaning over the water ; darkness offered him the great quiet bed—in immeasurable gloom. Sinister temptation.

He took off his coat, folded it and laid it on the parapet. Then he unbuttoned his waistcoat. As he was about to take it off, his hand struck against something in the pocket. It was the red book which the librarian of the House of Lords had given him. He took this memorandum book out of the pocket, examined it by the dim light of night, saw a pencil in it, took it, and wrote these two lines on the first blank page which opened : "I am going away. Let my brother David take my place, and be happy." And he signed : FERMAIN CLANCHARLIE, Peer of England.

Then he took off the waistcoat and laid it on the coat. He took off his hat and laid it

on the waistcoat. He put the red book, opened at the page on which he had written, in the hat. He saw a stone on the ground, took it, and put it in the hat.

That done, he looked at the dark immensity over his head.

Then, his head drooped slowly, as if drawn by the invisible thread of the depths.

There was a hole in the stones near the surbase of the parapet; he placed one foot in it, so that his knee came above the top of it, and he had hardly anything more to do, than to overstep it.

He crossed his hands behind his back and leaned forward.

"So be it," said he.

And he fixed his eyes on the deep water.

At this moment he felt a tongue licking his hands.

He shivered and turned around.

Homo was behind him.

CONCLUSION

SEA AND NIGHT

I

A WATCH DOG MAY BE A GUARDIAN ANGEL

Gwynplaine uttered a cry:

"Is that you, wolf!"

Homo wagged his tail. His eyes glistened in the darkness. He was looking at Gwynplaine.

Then he began to lick his hands again. For a moment, Gwynplaine was like a drunken man. He was experiencing the shock of the mighty return of hope. Homo! What an apparition! During the past forty-eight hours, he had exhausted what might be called all the varieties of thunderbolt; there remained only the thunderbolt of joy for him. This was the one that had just fallen upon him. Certainty regained once more, or at least the light which leads to it; the sudden intervention of some strange mysterious mercy which may be in destiny; life saying: "Here I am!" in the very darkest part of the tomb, and suddenly sketching cure and deliverance at the moment when we no longer expect

anything; something like a foothold found at the most critical instant of crumbling ruin—Homo was all that to him. Gwynplaine saw the wolf in a halo of light.

Meanwhile Homo had turned around. He took a few steps, and looked behind him, as if to see whether Gwynplaine were following him.

Gwynplaine had begun to follow him. Homo wagged his tail, and went on his way.

The road the wolf was taking, was the slope of Effroc-stone quay. This slope led to the bank of the Thames. Gwynplaine, guided by Homo, went down this slope.

From time to time, Homo turned his head, to make sure that Gwynplaine was behind him.

In certain extreme situations, nothing so much resembles all-comprehending intelligence, as the simple instinct of a loving animal. An animal is a lucid somnambulist.

There are cases when a dog feels the necessity of following his master, others, when he feels the necessity of preceding him. Then the animal undertakes the direction of mind. The imperturbable scent sees dimly in our twilight. The beast vaguely feels the necessity of making a guide of himself. Does he know that there is a dangerous bit of road, and that he must help man to get over it?

Probably not; perhaps he does; at all events, some one knows it for him; as we have already said, often, in life, mighty help which we think comes from below, comes to us from on high. We do not know all the forms that God can assume. What was this animal? Providence.

When he came to the bank, the wolf went on, down stream, on the narrow tongue of land which ran along the Thames.

He uttered no sound, he did not bark, he went along mutely. Homo, at all times, followed his instinct, and did his duty, but with the pensive reserve of an outlaw.

After about fifty steps, he stopped. There was a jetty at the right. At the end of this jetty, a sort of wharf on piles, an obscure mass, which was a rather large ship, could be made out. On this vessel's deck, near the prow, there was an almost indistinct glimmer, that looked like a night-lamp about to die out.

The wolf assured himself once more that Gwynplaine was there, then leaped on the jetty, a long, planked and tarred passageway, supported by open wood-work, and under which the river flowed. In a few instants, Homo and Gwynplaine had reached its end.

The vessel moored to the end of the jetty, was one of those Dutch paunches with two open decks, one forward and the other aft,

having, in the Japanese style, a deep uncovered compartment between the two decks, which could be reached by a straight ladder, and was now filled with all the packages of the cargo. This made two castles, one at the prow and one at the stern, as in our old river boats, with a hollow in the middle. The freight ballasted this hollow. The paper boats which children make are very nearly this shape. The cabins were under the decks, and communicated by doors with this central compartment, and were lighted by portholes pierced in the side. In stowing the cargo, passages were left between the packages. The two masts of these paunches were carried through the two decks. The foremast was called Paul, the mainmast, Peter, the ship being led by these two masts, as the Church by her two apostles.

A foot-bridge, making a gangway, led, like a Chinese bridge, from one deck to the other, above the central compartment. In bad weather, the two planked sides of the foot-bridge could be let down to the right and left, by means of some mechanism, thus making a roof over the hollow compartment, so that when the sea ran high, the vessel was hermetically closed. These very massive barks had a beam for a tiller; the power of the helm being necessarily proportioned to the weight

of the vessel. Three men, the skipper and two sailors, and a child, the cabin boy, sufficed to handle these heavy sea machines. As we have said before, the fore and aft-decks of the ship had no bulwarks. This particular paunch was a large, full-bottomed, perfectly black hull on which *Vograat, Rotterdam*, could be read in white letters, visible in the darkness.

At this period, several events at sea, and quite recently the catastrophe of Baron de Pointi's eight vessels at Cape Carnero, (twenty-first of April, 1705) in forcing all the French fleet to fall back on Gibraltar, had swept the Channel, and cleared the passage between London and Rotterdam of every man-of-war, so that merchant vessels could come and go without escort.

The vessel on which *Vograat* could be read, and close to which Gwynplaine had now come, touched the wharf almost on a level with the larboard side of her after-deck. There was only a step to take down; Homo with a bound, and Gwynplaine with one stride, were in the vessel. They were both on the after-deck. The deck was deserted, and no movement was to be seen there; the passengers, if there were any, and probably there were some, were on board, as the vessel was ready to start, and the stowage

was completed, as was indicated by the fullness of the hollow compartment, now encumbered with bales and cases. But they were no doubt in bed, and probably asleep in the cabins between decks under the after-deck, as the passage was to be made by night. In such a case, the passengers do not appear on deck until the following morning, on awakening. As for the crew, they were probably at supper in the little hole then called the "sailors' cabin," whilst awaiting the approaching moment of departure. Hence the solitude on the two decks, fore and aft, united by the foot-bridge.

On the jetty, the wolf had almost run; on the ship he began to walk slowly, and in a discreet way. He no longer wagged his tail joyously, but with the sad and feeble swing of an uneasy dog. He crossed the rear deck, still preceding Gwynplaine, and then the gangway.

Gwynplaine on stepping on the foot-bridge saw a glimmer before him. It was the light he had seen from the bank. A lantern was on the deck, at the foot of the forward mast. The reflection of this lantern outlined a black four-wheeled silhouette, against the dark background of night. Gwynplaine recognized Ursus' old hut.

This poor wooden hovel—cart and cabin—wherein his childhood had rolled along, was

fastened to the foot of the mast by thick ropes, whose knots could be seen on the wheels. After having been so long out of service, it had become absolutely decrepit; nothing dilapidates men and things like idleness: it slanted wretchedly. Disuse had made it quite paralytic, and, in addition, it had that incurable disease, old age. Its shapeless and worm-eaten outline tottered in an attitude of ruin. All the things it was made of, had a damaged look; the iron was rusty, the leather was cracked, the wood-work, decayed. The front window, through which a ray from the lantern came, was cracked. The wheels were knock-kneed. The walls, the floor and the axles seemed worn out with fatigue, altogether it had an inexpressibly crushed and supplicating look. The two raised points of the shaft, looked like arms stretched up to heaven. The whole thing was dislocated. Underneath, Homo's hanging chain could be seen.

To find one's life, one's happiness, one's love again, and to run wildly towards, and fling one's self upon them, would seem to be the law, and that nature so willed it. Yes, except in case of deep tremor. Whoever comes out of a series of catastrophes resembling treason, and is all shaken up and disconcerted by them, becomes prudent, even in joy; fears to bring his fatality upon those he

loves; feels himself to be dismally contagious, and does not advance towards even his happiness, but with precaution. Paradise opens once more; but before going in, he reconnoitres.

Gwynplaine staggering under his emotions, was gazing.

The wolf had silently gone to lie down near his chain.

II.

BARKILPHEDRO AIMING AT THE EAGLE STRIKES THE DOVE

The steps of the hut were lowered; the door was ajar; there was no one in it; the little light which came in by the front pane vaguely modeled the interior of the hovel, and made a melancholy half-light. Ursus' inscriptions glorifying the grandeur of lords, were distinct upon the decrepit boards, which were at once a wall without, and wainscoting within. On a nail, near the door, Gwynplaine saw his leather collar and jacket, hung up like the garments of a corpse, in a morgue.

At this moment, he had neither waistcoat nor coat on. The hut hid something that was stretched out on the deck at the foot of the mast, and which the lantern lit up. It was a mattress, of which one corner could be seen. Somebody was probably lying on the mattress. A shadow could be seen moving there.

Some one was speaking. Gwynplaine, hidden by the intervening hut, listened.

It was the voice of Ursus.

That voice, so harsh on the surface, so tender beneath, that had so often abused, yet so well guided Gwynplaine from his childhood, no longer had its sagacious and lively tone. It was vague and low, and died away in sighs at the end of every phrase. It bore but a confused resemblance to Ursus' natural and firm voice of other days. It was like the speech of one whose happiness is dead. A voice may become a ghost.

Ursus seemed to be carrying on a monologue, rather than a dialogue. Besides, we know, that it was his habit to soliloquize. He was considered eccentric on this account.

Gwynplaine held his breath, so as not to lose a word of what Ursus was saying, and this was what he heard:

"This kind of vessel is very dangerous. It has no bulwarks. If you roll, while at sea, nothing stops you. If the weather is rough, we would have to take her below, which would be terrible. An awkward movement, a fright, and there would be a rupture of an aneurism. I have seen cases of it. Oh! my God, what will become of us? Is she asleep? Yes. She is asleep. I do believe she is asleep. Is she unconscious? No. Her pulse is pretty strong. She certainly is asleep. Sleep is a respite. It is a good sort of blindness. What can I do

to prevent people from tramping about here? Gentlemen, if there is any one there on deck, I beg of you not to make any noise. Do not come near, if it is all the same to you. You know, a person in delicate health, needs a little consideration. She has the fever, you see. She's quite young. She's a little creature who is feverish. I put her on this mattress outside, so she might have a little air. I explain this, so that some care may be taken. She dropped upon the mattress from fatigue, as if she were swooning. But she is asleep. I would be very glad if she were not awakened. I address myself to the women, if there are any ladies here. A young girl, it is such a pity! We are only poor mountebanks; I ask people to show a little kindness, and then, if there is anything to pay so that there may be no noise, I'll pay. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Is there any one there? No. I think there is no one. I am talking in vain. So much the better. Gentlemen, I thank you, if you are there; and I thank you very much, if you are not there. Her forehead is all bathed in perspiration. Come, let us go back to the galleys, let us put on the collar again. Misery has come back. Here we are adrift again. A hand, the dreadful hand we never see, but which we always feel upon us, has once more suddenly turned us around to the

dark side of life. So be it; we shall be courageous. Only, she must not be ill. I suppose I look stupid talking out loud this way to myself, but she must feel that she has some one near her, if she happens to wake up. If only they do not wake her up suddenly! No noise, for Heaven's sake! A shock that would make her start up, would not be good for her. It would be very disagreeable, if any one came walking towards this side. I believe that the people in the vessel are asleep. I give thanks to Providence for this favor. Well, and now, where's Homo? In all this confusion, I forgot to chain him; I don't know what I am doing any longer, I have not seen him for over an hour, he must have gone to get his supper somewhere else. If only no harm comes to him! Homo! Homo!"

Homo softly rapped his tail on the flooring of the deck.

"You're there! Ah! You're there. God be praised. To have lost Homo, would have been too much. She moves her arm. Perhaps she will wake up. Be quiet, Homo. The tide is going out. We shall start, directly. I think it will be fine to-night. There is no north wind. The pennant droops along the mast, we shall have a good passage. I do not remember what the moon's phase is now. But the clouds scarcely move. The sea will not

be rough. We shall have fine weather. She is pale. That is weakness. No, she is red. That is fever. No, she is pink; she's well. I do not see well. My poor Homo, I do not see well any more. So we shall have to begin life anew. We are going to begin to work again. There are only two of us now, you see. You and I will work for her. She's our child. Ah! the vessel is moving. They are going. Good-bye, London! Good-evening! Good-night! Go to the devil! Ah! horrible London!"

The vessel, indeed, had the dull commotion caused by loosening the anchor. The interval between the wharf and the stern was growing wider. At the other end of the vessel, at the stern, a man, the skipper, no doubt, could be seen; he had just come out of the interior of the ship, and had loosened the moorings, and was now working the helm. This man, giving his whole attention to the channel, as is proper, when one is made up of the double phlegm of the Dutchman and the sailor, hearing nothing and seeing nothing but the wind and water, bent under the end of the tiller, mingled with the darkness, walked slowly on the after-deck, going and coming from larboard to starboard; a sort of phantom with a beam on his shoulder. He was alone on the deck. As long as they were on the river, no other sailor was necessary. In a few minutes

the vessel was drifting with the current. She went along without either rolling or pitching. The Thames, but little disturbed by the ebb-tide, was calm. The tide carrying her, the ship went along rapidly. Behind her, the black setting of London, was lessening in the mist.

Ursus continued:

"Nevertheless, I shall make her take digitalis. I am afraid that delirium may supervene. The palms of her hands are clammy. But what have we done against God, I should like to know? How quickly all this misfortune has come. Hideous rapidity of evil. A stone falls—it has claws; it is the hawk pouncing on the lark. It is destiny. And there you lie, my sweet child! You come to London, you say: 'It is a great city which has fine monuments. Southwark, is a splendid suburb.' You settle there. Now, they are abominable places. What do you want me to do there? I am glad to go away. This is the 30th of April. I have always mistrusted the month of April; the month of April has only two fortunate days, the 5th and the 27th, and four unfortunate days, the 10th, the 20th, the 29th and the 30th. This has been put beyond all doubt, by Cardan's calculations. I wish this day were over. It is comforting to have gone away. We shall be at Gravesend by daybreak, and at Rotterdam, to-morrow

night. Egad, I'll begin the life of former days in the hut, and we'll drag it, wont we, Homo?"

A slight rapping announced the wolf's consent.

Ursus went on:

"If one could only get out of a sorrow as one gets out of a town! Homo, we might still be happy. Alas! there would always be the one who is no more. A shadow remains over those who survive. You know what I mean, Homo. We were four, we are only three now. Life is nothing but a long loss of all we love. We leave a track of sorrows behind us. Destiny astounds us by a prolixity of intolerable sufferings. And then people are surprised because old people say the same things over and over. It is despair that makes them such old fogies. My good Homo, the favorable wind keeps up. The dome of Saint Paul's can no longer be seen. We shall be passing Greenwich shortly. That will be six good miles made. Ah! I am turning my back forever on those odious capitals, full of priests, magistrates and low crowds. I had rather see the leaves stir in the woods. Her forehead is still covered with perspiration! She has great violet veins, which I do not like, on her forearm. There is fever in them. Ah! all that kills me. Sleep, my child. Oh, yes, she sleeps."

Here a voice arose, an ineffable voice, which seemed far away, appeared to come from both the heights and the depths, and was divinely sad; Dea's voice.

All that Gwynplaine had endured up to this moment became as nothing. His angel was speaking. He thought he heard words said beyond the boundaries of life, in a swoon full of heaven.

The voice said:

"He was right to go away. This world is not the one he needs. Only, I must go with him. Father, I am not ill; I heard you speak just now; I am very well; I feel well, I was sleeping. Father, I am going to be happy."

"My child," asked Ursus, in an agonized tone, "what do you mean by that?"

The answer was:

"Father, do not grieve about it."

There was a pause, as if for taking breath, then these few words, said slowly, reached Gwynplaine:

"Gwynplaine is not here any more. Now I am truly blind. I did know what night was. Night, is absence."

The voice stopped again, then went on:

"I was always anxious lest he should fly away; I felt he was something heavenly. All at once, he took flight. It had to end so. A

soul goes away like a bird. But the soul's nest is down in a depth where the great loadstone is, which attracts everything; and I know where to find Gwynplaine. I am not puzzled about my way, you may be sure. Father, it is yonder. Later, you will join us. And Homo, too."

Homo, hearing his name pronounced, rapped a little blow on the deck.

"Father," the voice resumed, "you understand perfectly, that once Gwynplaine is not here, it is all over. Even if I wanted to stay I could not, because one has to breathe. You must not ask for what is impossible. I was with Gwynplaine; that was quite natural, so I lived. Now Gwynplaine is no longer here, I die. It is the same thing. Either he must come back, or I must go away. Since he cannot come back, I am going. It is very good to die. It is not hard at all. Father, that which is extinguished here, is kindled again, elsewhere. To live on this earth, where we are, is heart-breaking. It is impossible that one should be unhappy forever. Then we go off into what you call the stars; you marry there, you never part again, and you love, you love, you love, and that is what the good God is."

"There, do not get angry," said Ursus.

The voice continued:

"Well, last year, for instance, in the Spring of last year, we were together, we were happy; there's a great difference now. I no longer remember what little town we were in; there were trees, I heard the birds sing. We came to London. Things changed. I am not making any reproach. You come to a country, you cannot know. Father, do you remember? One evening there was a woman in the big box, you said: 'She's a duchess!' I was sad. I think it would have been better to have stayed in the little towns; but then Gwynplaine only did what was right. Now it is my turn. Since it was you who told me that I was quite little, that my mother was dead, that I was on the ground at night, with snow falling on me, and that he, who was little too, and all alone, too, had picked me up, and that it was so that I happened to be alive, you cannot be surprised, that to-day I should feel the absolute need of going away, and that I should want to go and see whether Gwynplaine is in the grave. Because the only thing that exists in life, is the heart; and after life, it is the soul. You fully understand what I say, don't you, father? What is moving so? It seems to me I am in a moving house. Yet I don't hear the sound of wheels."

After an interruption, the voice added:

"I cannot make a clear distinction between yesterday and to-day. I do not complain. I do not know what has happened, but it must have been something."

These words were said with a deep, inconsolable sweetness, and a sigh, which Gwynplaine heard, ended thus:

"I must go away, unless he returns."

Ursus, gloomily grumbled in a low tone:

"I do not believe in ghosts."

He went on:

"This is a bark. You ask why the house moves, it is because we are on a bark. Be calm. You must not talk too much. My daughter, if you have a little love for me, do not excite yourself, do not give yourself a fever. Being so old, I could not bear up against any sickness you might have. Spare me, do not become ill."

The voice began again:

"What is the use of looking for him on earth? Since one can only find him in heaven."

Ursus replied, almost with an effort at authority:

"Calm yourself. There are times when you have no common sense at all. I recommend you to keep still. After all, you are not obliged to know what the *vena cava* is. I should be quiet, if you were quiet. My child,

do something for me too. He picked you up, but I sheltered you. You are making yourself ill. That's wrong. You must grow calmer and go to sleep. All will go well. I pledge you my word of honor that all will go well. Besides, we are having very fine weather. It seems as if the night were made on purpose. To-morrow we shall be in Rotterdam, which is a city in Holland, at the mouth of the Meuse."

"Father," said the voice, "you see, when it has been ever since childhood, and when one has always been with the other, it ought not to be changed, because then one must die, and there is not even any means of doing otherwise. Still I love you very much, but I feel sure that I am not entirely with you any more, although I am not yet with him."

"Come," insisted Ursus, "try to go to sleep again."

The voice answered:

"I shall not fail to do that."

Ursus began again, with a trembling accent:

"I tell you we are going to Holland, to Rotterdam, a city."

"Father," continued the voice, "I am not ill; if that is what makes you anxious, you may be easy; I have no fever, I am a little warm, that's all."

Ursus stammered:

"At the mouth of the Meuse."

"I am well, father; but you see, I feel I am dying."

"Do not dare to think of such a thing," said Ursus.

And he added:

"Above all, preserve her from a shock, oh, God!"

There was a silence.

All at once Ursus cried:

"What are you doing? Why are you getting up? I beg of you, to lie still!"

Gwynplaine trembled, and moved his head forward.

III.

PARADISE REGAINED HERE BELOW

He saw Dea. She had just stood straight up on the mattress. She had on a long, white, carefully closed dress, which only allowed the spring of the shoulder and the delicate throat to be seen. The sleeves hid her arms, the folds covered her feet. Her hands, on which the network of veins were swollen in blue branches, showed. She was shivering, and swung, more than she tottered, to and fro, like a reed. The lantern lit her up from below. Her beautiful face was ineffable. Her unloosened hair was floating. No tears flowed down her cheeks. Both fire and darkness were in her eyes. She was pale with that pallor, which resembles the transparence of divine life on a terrestrial face. Her frail and exquisite body seemed melted into, and mingled with, the folds of her robe. She waved from head to foot with the tremulousness of a flame. And at the same time, one felt that she was beginning to be nothing but a shadow.

Her wide opened eyes were resplendent. One might have called her a resurrection, and a soul standing in an aurora.

Ursus, whose back alone Gwynplaine could see, raised his affrighted arms:

"My daughter! oh! my God! She is becoming delirious! Delirium! That is what I feared. She ought not to have a shock, for that might kill her; and she ought to have one, to prevent her from becoming mad! Dead or mad! What a situation! My God, what am I to do? My daughter, lie down again!"

Meanwhile Dea was speaking. Her voice was almost indistinct, as if a celestial thickness had already been interposed between her and the earth.

"Father, you are mistaken. I am not delirious. I hear all you say to me, perfectly. You tell me that there are a great many people, that they are waiting, and that I must play to-night; I will, you see that I am sane; but I don't know how to do it, since I am dead, and since Gwynplaine is dead. Nevertheless, I am coming. I am willing to play. Here I am; but Gwynplaine is no longer here."

"My child," repeated Ursus, "come, obey me. Lie down on your bed again."

"He is no longer here! He is no longer here! Oh! How dark it is!"

"Dark!" stammered Ursus, "this is the first time she has said that word!"

Gwynplaine, without any more noise than gliding makes, went up the steps of the hut, entered it, unhooked his jacket and his leather collar, put on the jacket, put the collar around his neck, and came down from the hut again, always hidden by the kind of screen made by the hut itself, the rigging and the mast.

Dea continued to murmur, she moved her lips, and by degrees this murmur became a melody. With the interruptions and the omissions of delirium, she tried to repeat the mysterious call, which she had so many times addressed to Gwynplaine in *Chaos Conquered.* She began to sing, and the song was as vague and weak as the humming of a bee:

Noche, quítate de allí
El alba canta . . .

She interrupted herself:

"No, it is not true, I am not dead. What was I saying? Alas! I am alive. I am alive, and he is dead. I am below, and he is on high. He is gone, and I stay here. I shall never hear him speak, or walk again. God had given us a little of Paradise on earth, and has taken it away again. Gwynplaine! It is

over. I shall not feel him near me again. Never. His voice! I shall not hear his voice any more."

And she sang:

Es menester a cilos ir . . .
. . . . Dexa, quiero,
A tu negro
Caparazon.

And she stretched out her hand, as if seeking what she could lean on in space.

Gwynplaine, rising next to Ursus, who was suddenly petrified, knelt down before her.

"Never!" said Dea. "Never! I shall never hear him more."

And she began to sing again in a wild way:

Dexa, quiero,
A tu negro
Caparazon.

Then she heard a voice, the beloved voice, which answered:

O ven! ama!
Eres alma,
Soy carazon.

And at the same time felt Gwynplaine's head under her hand. She uttered an inexpressible cry:

"Gwynplaine!"

A star-like light appeared in her pale face, and she tottered.

Gwynplaine caught her in his arms.

"Living," cried Ursus.

Dea repeated: "Gwynplaine!"

And her head bent towards Gwynplaine's cheek. She said, quite low: "You have come down again! Thanks."

And raising her forehead, sitting on Gwynplaine's knee, enfolded in his clasp, she turned her sweet face towards him, and fixed her eyes full of darkness and of beams of light, upon Gwynplaine's eyes, as if she were looking at him. "It is you!" said she.

Gwynplaine covered her dress with kisses. There are expressions which are at once words, cries and sobs. All ecstasy and all grief melt and burst out in them pell-mell. They have no sense, and they say everything.

"Yes, I! It is I! I, Gwynplaine! He whose soul thou art, dost hear? I, whose child, whose wife, whose star, whose breath, thou art! I, whose eternity thou art! It is I! I am here, I hold thee in my arms. I am alive. I am thine. Ah! when I think that I was at the point of ending it all! One moment more! If it had not been for Homo! I shall tell thee all that. How near joy is to despair! Dea, let us live! Dea, forgive me!

Yes, thine forever! Thou art right; touch my forehead, assure thyself that it is I. If thou knew'st! But nothing can separate us any more. I come from hell, and I rise to heaven again. Thou say'st that I have come down, no, I have come up. Here I am again with thee. Forever, I tell thee! Together! We are together! Who would have said so? We find each other again. All evil is past. There is nothing before us but enchantment. We will begin our happy life over again, and we will shut its door so well, that misfortune can not get in any more. I will tell thee everything. It will surprise thee. The ship has left. Nobody can prevent the ship from having left. We are on the way, and free. We are going to Holland; we will get married, I shall have no trouble to earn my living, who could prevent that? There is nothing more to fear. I adore thee."

"Not so fast!" stammered Ursus.

Dea, trembling, and with a quivering, celestial touch, passed her hand over Gwynplaine's profile. He heard her say to herself: "God is like this."

Then she touched his garments.

"The collar," said she. "The jacket. Nothing is changed. All is as it was before."

Ursus, stupefied, beaming, laughing, bathed in tears, looked at them, and addressed an aside to himself.

"I do not understand at all. I am an absurd idiot. I, who saw him carried to the grave! I weep and I laugh. That is all I know. I am as stupid as if, I too, were in love. But that is just what I am. I am in love with both of them. Go along, you old brute! Too many emotions. Too many emotions. That is what I feared. No, that is what I wanted. Gwynplaine, be careful of her. Never mind, let them kiss each other. It is none of my business. I am merely present at the occurrence. What I feel is strange. I am the parasite of their happiness, and I take my share of it. I do not count for anything in it, and it seems to me that I count in it for something. My children, I bless you."

And while Ursus was soliloquizing, Gwynplaine exclaimed:

"Dea, you are too beautiful. I do not know where my mind has been wandering of late. There is absolutely no one in the world, but you. I see you once more, and I cannot believe it yet. On this bark. But tell me, what happened? And is this the state they have brought you to? Where is the Green-Box? They robbed you, they drove you

away. It's infamous. Ah! I will avenge you both! I will avenge you, Dea! They will have to account to me. I am a peer of England."

Ursus, as if he had been struck full in the breast by a planet, drew back, and gazed at Gwynplaine attentively. "He is not dead, that's certain, but is he mad?"

And he pricked up his ears suspiciously.

Gwynplaine resumed:

"Make your mind easy, Dea. I shall carry my complaint to the House of Lords."

Ursus looked at him closely again, and struck the middle of his forehead with the tip of his finger.

Then making up his mind: "It is all the same to me," he murmured. "It will do just as well. Be crazy, if you want to, my Gwynplaine. It is man's privilege. As for me, I am happy. But what is all that?"

The vessel continued to sail rapidly and gently, the night became darker and darker, the mists from the ocean, invaded the zenith, whence no wind blew them away, and only a few large stars were visible, and even they were disappearing one after the other, and very soon there were none at all, and all the sky was dark, infinite and soft. The river widened, and its banks, at the right and left, were only two thin brown lines almost amalgamated with darkness. A deep peace rose

out of all this shadow. Gwynplaine, was half seated, holding Dea in his embrace. They spoke, exclaimed, chattered, whispered. It was an excited dialogue. How can we paint thee, O Joy?

"My life!"

"My Heaven!"

"My love!"

"All my happiness!"

"Gwynplaine!"

"Dea! I am drunk. Let me kiss your feet."

"So it is really you!"

"At this moment, I have too much to say at once. I do not know where to begin."

"A kiss!"

"Oh, my wife!"

"Gwynplaine, don't tell me that I am beautiful. It is you who are beautiful."

"I find you again, I hold you to my heart. It is real. You are mine. I am not dreaming. It is really you. Is it possible? Yes. I retake possession of life. If you knew, there have been all sorts of events, Dea!"

"Gwynplaine!"

"I love thee!"

And Ursus murmured:

"I am as happy as a grandfather."

Homo had come from under the hut, and was going from one to the other most

discreetly, not demanding that any attention should be paid to him, but just licking things at random, now Ursus' heavy shoes, now Gwynplaine's jacket, now Dea's dress, now the mattress. It was his way of blessing.

They had gone past Chatham and the mouth of the Medway. They were nearing the sea. The dark serenity of space was so great, that the passage down the Thames afforded no difficulty; no manœuvre was necessary, and no sailor had been called on deck. At the other end of the ship, the skipper still alone at the tiller, was steering. At the stern there was no one but that man; at the bows, the lantern lit up the happy group of these creatures, who, at the very depths of misfortune, suddenly changed into felicity, had just had their unhoped-for meeting.

IV.

NO, ON HIGH!

Suddenly, Dea freeing herself from Gwynplaine's embrace, rose. She pressed both her hands on her heart, as if to prevent it from getting out of place.

"What is the matter with me?" said she. "Something is the matter with me. Joy is suffocating. It is nothing. That is good. Oh! you gave me such a shock by coming back, my Gwynplaine. A shock of joy. It is intoxicating to have the whole of heaven come into your heart. You being absent, I felt myself dying. You gave me back my true life, which was going. Something in me has been torn away, it was the tearing away of darkness, and I felt life rising, a burning life, a life of fever and delight. The life that you have just given me, is extraordinary. It is so heavenly, that it makes me suffer a little. It is just as if my soul were growing, and hardly found room enough in my body. This life of the seraphim, this plenitude rushes to my very head.

and penetrates me. I feel a beating of wings in my breast. I feel strange to myself, but very happy. Gwynplaine, you have resuscitated me."

She flushed, then paled, then flushed again, and fell.

"Alas!" said Ursus, "you have killed her."

Gwynplaine stretched out his arms to Dea. Supreme anguish coming during supreme ecstasy—what a shock! He would have fallen himself, if he had not been obliged to support her.

"Dea!" he cried, shuddering, "what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing," said she. "I love you."

She lay in Gwynplaine's arms like gathered up drapery. Her hands hung.

Gwynplaine and Ursus laid Dea on the mattress. She said feebly: "I cannot breathe lying down."

They sat her up.

Ursus said:

"A pillow!"

She answered:

"Why? I have Gwynplaine."

And she placed her head on Gwynplaine's shoulder, seated behind her, and supporting her, his eye full of unhappy bewilderment.

"Ah!" she said, "how comfortable I am!"

Ursus had seized her wrist, and was counting the pulsations of the artery. He did not shake his head, he said nothing, and one could not guess what he was thinking, except for the rapid movements of his eyelids, which opened and closed convulsively, as if to prevent a flood of tears from escaping.

"What is the matter with her?" asked Gwynplaine.

Ursus put his ear to Dea's left side.

Gwynplaine repeated his question ardently, trembling lest Ursus should answer him.

Ursus looked at Gwynplaine, then at Dea. He was livid. He said:

"We must be opposite Canterbury. The distance from here to Gravesend is not very great. We shall have fine weather all night. There is no attack to be feared at sea, because all the war fleets, are on the Spanish coast. We shall have a good passage."

Dea, drooping and growing paler and paler, was crumpling the stuff of her gown in her convulsive fingers. She breathed an unutterably pensive sigh, and murmured: "I understand what it is. I am dying."

Gwynplaine rose, terrified. Ursus supported Dea.

"Die! You die! No, it shall not be. You cannot die. Die now! Die at once! It is impossible. God is not cruel. To give

you back and to take you again, the same minute! No. Such things cannot be done. If so, God wants us to doubt Him. If so, then everything is a snare, the earth, the sky, the infant's cradle, the mother's bosom, the human heart, love and the stars! God would be a traitor, and man a dupe! And nothing would be left! Creation would be insulted! And all would be a yawning abyss! You don't know what you are saying, Dea! You shall live. I insist upon your living. You must obey me. I am your husband and your master. I forbid you to leave me. Oh, heavens! Oh, miserable men! No, it cannot be. And am I to remain on this earth after you? It is so monstrous, that the sun would seem to be gone. Dea, Dea, come to yourself. It is but a short moment of pain which will pass away. Sometimes a shudder passes over us, and then we don't think of it again. It is absolutely necessary for me that you should be well, and suffer no more. You die? What have I done to you? Merely to think of it, makes me lose my reason. We belong to each other. We love each other. You have no reason for going away. It would be unjust. Have I committed crimes? Besides, you have forgiven me. Oh! you do not want me to become desperate, a villain, a maniac, and damned! Dea! I

pray you, I conjure you, I beg of you with clasped hands, do not die."

And clenching his fists in his hair, agonizing in terror, choked with tears, he threw himself at her feet.

"My Gwynplaine," said Dea, "it is not my fault."

A little pink froth rose to her lips, which Ursus wiped away with a part of her dress, without letting Gwynplaine, who was prostrate, see it. Gwynplaine held Dea's feet clasped, and was imploring her with all sorts of confused words.

"I tell you, that I will not have it. *You*, die! I have not the strength to bear it. Die? Yes; but together. Not otherwise. *You* die, Dea! There is no means to make me consent to it. My divinity! My love! Try to understand that I am here. I swear to you that you shall live. Die! If so, it is because you don't imagine what will become of me, after you are dead. If you had any idea of the need I have of not losing you, you would see that it is perfectly impossible, Dea! I have no one but you, you see. What has happened to me is extraordinary. You do not imagine that I have gone through a whole life-time in a few hours. I have discovered one thing, and that is, that there is nothing at all in it. You, you exist.

If you are not here, the whole universe has no more meaning. Stay. Have pity on me. Since you love me, live. I have just found you, so as to keep you. Wait a little while. You cannot go away so, when we have been together but a few moments. Do not be impatient. Oh, my God! how I suffer! You are not angry with me, are you? You certainly understand that I could not do anything but go, since it was the Wapentake, who came to fetch me. You'll see that you will be able to breathe better, directly. Dea, everything has just been arranged. We are going to be happy. Do not drive me to despair. Dea! I have done nothing to you!"

These words were not said, but sobbed. A mixture of broken-heartedness and revolt could be felt in them. A moan that would have attracted doves, and a roar that would have made lions recoil, issued from Gwynplaine's breast.

Dea answered him, in a voice which was becoming less and less distinct, stopping at nearly every word:

"Alas! it is useless. My beloved, I see perfectly that you are doing all you can. An hour ago, I wanted to die, now, I am no longer willing. Gwynplaine, my adored Gwynplaine, how happy we have been! God put you in my life, He takes me

from yours. And now I am going away. You will remember the Green-Box, won't you? And your poor, little, blind Dea? You will remember my song. Do not forget the sound of my voice, and the manner in which I said, 'I love thee!' to you. I will come back to say it to you at night, when you are asleep. We had found each other again, but it was too much joy. It had to end at once. I certainly am to be the first one to go away. I dearly love my father, Ursus, and our brother, Homo. You are good. There is no air here. Open the window. My Gwynplaine, I did not tell you, but once because a woman came, I was jealous. You do not even know of whom I speak. Is that not so? Cover my arms. I am rather cold. And Fibi? And Vinos? Where are they? We come to loving everybody. We make friends of all the people who have seen us happy. We are grateful to them for having been there while we were happy. Why did all that happen? I have not clearly understood all that has happened within the last two days. Now I am dying. Leave me in my gown. A little while ago, in putting it on, I thought it would be my shroud. I want to keep it on. There are some of Gwynplaine's kisses upon it. Oh! I should so much have wished to live longer. What a charming life we led in

our poor rolling hut. We sang. I heard the clapping of hands! How good it was, never to be separated! It seemed to me that I was in a cloud with you; I could explain everything to myself; I could tell one day from another; although blind, I knew when it was morning, because I heard Gwynplaine; I knew when it was night, because I dreamed of Gwynplaine. I felt myself enwrapped in something which was his soul. We adored each other tenderly. All that is going away, and there will be no more songs. Alas! Is it not possible to live a little longer. You will think of me, my beloved."

Her voice was becoming weaker. The mournful decrease of her agony took away her breath. She folded her thumbs under her fingers, a sign that her last moments were approaching. The budding angel's lisp seemed to be blended with the virgin's last sweet gasps.

She murmured:

"You will remember, won't you? because it would be very sad for me to be dead, if you did not remember me. I was wilful sometimes. I beg you all pardon. I am certain, that if the good God had so willed it, as we do not take up much room, we could have been happy yet, my Gwynplaine, as we would have earned our living,

and would have been together in another country; but the good God has not willed it so. I do not at all know why I am dying. As I never complained of being blind, I offended no one. I never should have asked for anything more, than to remain blind and near to you. Oh! how sad it is to go away!"

Her words panted, and were extinguished one after the other, as if some one had blown on them. One could hardly hear her any more.

"Gwynplaine," she resumed, "you will think of me, won't you? I shall need it when I am dead."

And she added:

"Oh! hold me back!"

Then, after a pause, she said:

"Come and join me as soon as you can. I am going to be very unhappy without you, even with God. Do not leave me alone too long, my sweet Gwynplaine! Paradise is here. Up there, it is only heaven. Ah! I am suffocating. My beloved! My beloved! My beloved!"

"Have mercy!" cried Gwynplaine.

"Farewell!" said she.

"Mercy!" repeated Gwynplaine.

And he pressed his mouth on Dea's beautiful icy hands.

For a moment she seemed to be no longer breathing.

Then she rose on her elbows, an intense flash passed across her eyes, and she smiled ineffably. Her voice rang out clearly.

"Light!" she cried. "I see."

And she expired.

She fell back rigid and motionless upon the mattress.

"Dead," said Ursus.

And the poor old fellow, as if crushed by his despair, bowed his bald head, and buried his sobbing face in the folds of the gown about Dea's feet. He remained there in a swoon.

Then Gwynplaine became awful.

He rose, raised his head, and gazed at the immensity of darkness above him.

Then, seen by no one, yet perhaps looked at in all that gloom by some invisible being, he stretched out his arms towards the depths above, and said:

"I come."

And he began to walk, across the deck, towards the sides, as if a vision were drawing him.

A few steps away there was the abyss.

He was walking slowly; he did not look down.

He wore the smile which Dea had just had.

He walked straight before him. He seemed to see something. He had a light in his eye,

which was like the reflection of a soul seen afar off.

He exclaimed: "Yes."

Each step took him nearer the vessel's side.

He walked rigidly, with raised arms, his head thrown back, his eyes fixed, with a phantom's stride.

He went forward without haste and without hesitation, with fatal precision, as if the yawning chasm of the open tomb had not been quite close to him.

He murmured:

"Do not fear. I am following you. I see the sign you are making me, very clearly."

He did not take his eyes from one point in the sky, at the very summit of darkness. He was smiling.

The sky was absolutely black, there were no more stars, but he evidently saw one.

He crossed the deck.

After a few rigid and ominous steps, he reached the extreme edge.

"I come," said he. "Dea, here I am."

And he went on. There was no bulwark. Empty space lay before him. He stepped into it.

He fell.

The night was thick and dull; the water, deep. He sank. It was a calm and dark disappearance. No one either saw or heard

anything. The ship continued to sail, and the river to flow.

Not long afterwards, the ship reached the ocean.

When Ursus came to himself, he did not see Gwynplaine, but he noticed Homo near the vessel's edge, howling into the darkness, while he looked at the sea.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE LAUGHING MAN

VOLUME IV

BOOK VII—THE TITANESS

	CHAPTER	PAGE
Awakening	I	7
The Resemblance of a Palace to a Wood	II	12
Eve	III	19
Satan	IV	32
They Recognize, but They Do Not Know Each Other	V	52

BOOK VIII—THE CAPITOL AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

Dissection of Majestic Things	I	59
Impartiality	II	82
The Old Hall	III	96
The Old House of Lords	IV	106
Lordly Gossip	V	116
The High and the Low	VI	130
Storms of Men Worse than Ocean Storms	VII	138
Would Be a Good Brother if he were not a Good Son	VIII	168

BOOK IX—IN RUINS

	CHAPTER	PAGE
It is Through Excess of Greatness, that One Reaches the Excess of Misery .	I .	179
The Residue	II .	186

CONCLUSION—SEA AND NIGHT

A Watch Dog may be a Guardian Angel	I .	219
Barkilphedro Aiming at the Eagle Strikes the Dove	II .	227
Paradise Regained Here Below . . .	III .	240
No, on High!	IV .	250

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